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A MEMOIR

OF

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

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SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

BY

H. R. FOX BOURNE.

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PREFACE.

Among the common praises of Sir Philip Sidney were interspersed stray records of fact by many of the friends who survived him. One, probably Edmund Molineux, writing his contribution to Hollinshed's *Chronicles*, when intelligence of the hero's death arrived, turned aside to recal a few prominent events in his life. Another, Thomas Lant, proud to call himself "a servant to the said honourable knight," desiring to transform into a lasting honour the pageant of a day, spent a year in preparing an elaborate pictorial account of *The Procession at the Obsequies of Sir Philip Sidney, Knight.* Of his work a copy—I believe, unique—is lodged in the Library of the British Museum. Contemporary with it, but lost to us, was *Sidney, or Baripenthes; briefly shadowing out the rare and never-ending Lauds of that most Honourable and Praiseworthy Sir Philip Sidney, Knight* (London, 1586, 4to), by Sir William Herbert. That is not the only missing biography. About the year 1600, Sir James Perrot, son of the more famous Sir John Perrot, penned *The History of the Noble Birth, Education, and Singular Good Parts of Sir Philip Sidney*, of which the manuscript, never printed, though much admired by those who saw it,

cannot now be found. A third memoir has been more fortunate. *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney*, by his kinsman and constant friend Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, was published in 1652 (12mo, pp. 247), and again at the private press of Sir Egerton Brydges, and with some notes by that able antiquary, in 1816 (*Lee Priory*, two vols. 8vo, pp. 75 and 106). Greville's work, read in connection with many fragments of biography scattered through the histories of the period, was, for many years, the chief authority respecting Sidney's life. Writing with a friend's knowledge of details, and in honest admiration of a career which he bravely set himself to imitate, he gave admirable account of many episodes in Sidney's history shared by himself, and exquisite sketches of many features in Sidney's character, as he was able to read it. But, writing with an old man's indistinctness of memory, and regardless of chronological order or technical precision, he fell into much inaccuracy, misleading to later biographers. "It is to be wished," remarked Anthony à Wood, at the close of the seventeenth century, "that Sir Philip Sidney's life might be written by some judicious hand, and that the imperfect essay of Lord Brooke might be supplied."

Wood himself essayed a little in his sketch of Sidney, included in the *Athenæ Oxonienses*, which appeared in 1691. Much more was done by Arthur Collins, who, in 1745, issued the *Letters and Memorials of State written and collected by Sir Henry Sidney, the famous Sir Philip Sidney, and his brother Sir Robert Sidney. . . . . Also Memoirs of the Lives and Actions of the Sidneys* (two volumes, folio, pp. 1313). Searching

zealously among the family archives at Penshurst, the manuscripts in the British Museum and other literary storehouses, Collins provided valuable material for an undertaking of Sidney's life. Moreover, his prefatory account of the chief members of the Sidney family and its branches, contained a useful epitome of Philip's personal story, although the antiquary, brief by design, and not caring to view with microscopic eye this part of his subject, repeated many old blunders, and added some new ones, where his own collection might have set him right. He was far more moderate and precise, however, than Doctor Thomas Zouch, Dean of York, whose *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Sir Philip Sidney* appeared in 1808 (4to, pp. 369).

Approaching his subject with honest purpose, and handling it as skilfully as he could, Zouch failed to produce a trustworthy book. He was too ready to adopt as facts the vague traditions with which he met, and the random conclusions arrived at by himself. While diligently hunting for new matter, also, and finding some which was very important, he was often careless in putting it to use. One curious illustration of his inaccuracy, both of fact and of surmise, is in his quotation, from Ben Jonson's poems, of an epigram "To Mrs. Philip Sidney," with a statement that it was presented by the poet to Sir Francis Walsingham's daughter soon after her marriage with Sir Philip Sidney. Honest Ben would never have addressed the wife of a Knight as "Mrs."; and certainly he could not have done so at the time in question, he being but ten or eleven years old, and not yet even a bricklayer's assistant, much less a

courtly poet. I imagine that the real heroine of the epigram was Mistress Philippa Sidney, Sir Philip's niece, and daughter of Ben Jonson's patron Robert, second Earl of Leicester; but assuredly it was not addressed to Lady Frances Sidney.

One of Zouch's errors, most common of all among reckless readers of old papers, was especially unfortunate. He failed to notice that, in all the official documents, and in most of the private records of England, prior to 1752, the commencement of the year was reckoned, not from the 1st of January, but from the 25th of March, and that on the Continent the same rule applied before 1582. Hence, for nearly three months in each year, Zouch's chronology is hopelessly confused. Sidney's mission of condolence to the Emperor Rodolph, on the death of his father, for instance, is stated to have been in February, 1576, whereas Rodolph was not an orphan until the October of that year. Throughout the volume occur numerous errors of the same sort, all the more likely to deceive because in many of them there is not the same transparent absurdity. Except in one or two cases, I have not thought it worth while in my notes to point out Zouch's errors: but the aid which I have received from his researches has been carefully acknowledged.

Of Hubert Languet's ninety-six letters to Sidney, published in Edinburgh by Lord Hailes, in 1776 (8vo, pp. 289), Zouch made some good use. Since his time, however, they have acquired much new interest, consequent on the discovery, by the Reverend Steuart A. Pears, of sixteen of Sidney's replies. Reading the two sets of

letters conjointly, we can obtain far clearer insight into the movements and the characters of both writers than was possible to any one in Zouch's day. *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney with Hubert Languet: now first collected, and translated from the Latin, with Notes and a Memoir of Sidney*, was compiled by Mr. Pears in 1845 (8vo, Memoir, pp. 74 ; Latin letters, pp. 28) ; and next year three of the epistles were included in Doctor Robinson's collection of *Zurich Letters* issued by the Parker Society. To both gentlemen I am indebted, not only for the Latin letters, but also for the scholarly translations which, wherever they could help me, I have freely used in preparing my own more colloquial rendering.

Mr. Gray's Memoir (pp. 55), prefatory to his edition of Sidney's *Miscellaneous Works*, which appeared in 1829, is mainly an epitome of Zouch's book. His volume, however, has been helpful to me, although, in respect of the few letters first published by him, I have generally, for greater accuracy, and in correction of some errors into which he has slipped, chosen to consult the original documents.

To Mr. Motley, the latest traveller, albeit but incidentally, over the ground of Sidney biography, my thanks are also due. In his careful and minute exposition of the war in the Low Countries, containing the most exciting episode in Sir Philip Sidney's life, he has anticipated much of the material that I had collected before reading his interesting volumes on *The United Netherlands*, and has also supplied me with some information which, without his help, I might not have

possessed. His work has led me,—not, I confess, without some regret,—to treat less fully than I had intended of the great events preceding and surrounding the battle of Zutphen. I cannot, in all cases, accept his estimate of those events; but it would have been against my purpose, in writing this volume, either to have paused to controvert the judgments, irrelevant to my immediate theme, from which I dissent, or to have related—save in the briefest summary, where it was needful to the completeness of my own story—what has substantially been so well told elsewhere.

To other books, by authors dead and living,—especially to Nichols's entertaining collection of papers illustrating the Elizabethan Progresses and Pageants; to Wood's several works upon Oxford Antiquities and Biography; to the *Athenæ Cantabrigienses*, now being prepared by the Messrs. Cooper, worthy followers, for their own University, in the track marked out by Wood; and to Mr. Bruce's gathering of *Leicester Correspondence*, printed for the Camden Society;—my debts, as they have been incurred, have been specified in footnotes.

I have also been particular in detailing the sources from which I have drawn fresh material for this Memoir of Sir Philip Sidney. Chief of these sources is the invaluable collection of documents, public and private, treasured in the State Paper Office. From that storehouse—hitherto unexplored, I believe, by any searcher for information about Sidney's life—I have been fortunate in obtaining many letters and papers of considerable interest, as giving additional knowledge of his career and character; while many others have

afforded corroboration of matters already partially known, or explanation of subjects till now mysterious. The manuscript collections in the British Museum, though often visited by others, have also supplied me with a few important details not before detected; and out of local histories and books on other themes, I have been able to extract some fragments of intelligence new as regards their connection with Sidney's history.

By a collation of printed and unprinted records I have succeeded in fixing, within a month or two, the time of Sidney's entrance at Oxford, placing it a year earlier than the date commonly given; and into the history of his college years some fresh insight has been obtained from the State Paper Office. Correspondence between Sir Henry Sidney and Sir William Cecil shows us how highly Philip was esteemed even in his boyhood; and a letter, in schoolboy Latin, written by Philip himself, has an interest of its own. Respecting the history of his projected marriage with Anne Cecil, I have succeeded in adding many links to the final one alone presented by Zouch. Having told anew the story of his foreign travel and experience, as recounted in his correspondence with Languet, I have been able to show from that correspondence, that, soon after his return to England, he was a sharer in the famous festivities at Kenilworth, and that thence he proceeded to Chartley, the home of the lady soon to be immortalized as Stella. That in 1576 he went to Ireland, is shown by documents in the State Paper Office; and from that and other sources we are able to draw some new and very memorable details of his visit. Fresh

light is thrown upon his work as an ambassador in 1577, by the finding among the Harleian MSS. of the code of instructions given him by the Queen; and by discovering, in the Cottonian collection, part of a lost treatise on his father's Irish policy, I have been able for the first time fully to set forth a very noteworthy episode in his history. In sketching his life at Court, I have attempted to represent its true temper—one far more serious than that commonly attributed to him. In proving that the cause of his retirement from Court in 1580 was not a trivial quarrel with the Earl of Oxford, but a patriotic dispute with Queen Elizabeth, I have been able to adduce a characteristic instance of his nobleness of mind. In my account of his connection with Stella, the one unwelcome passage in his life, I believe I have cleared away much previous mystery. No important information about the middle period of Sidney's history is to be met with at the State Paper Office; but thence I have drawn much in illustration of his later career. Some faint light is thrown upon the preliminaries of his marriage with Sir Francis Walsingham's daughter. Far more important, however, is the evidence that in 1583 he held a charter for going out as almost the first English colonist of America, and that, that project being on good grounds abandoned, in 1585 he received office from the Queen as Master of the Ordnance. Letters written at this period by him to Burghley and Walsingham, and about him by many men more or less famous, afford clear indication of his yet further growth, both in native worth and in influence upon the affairs of his country,

while several other letters belonging to the last few months of his life enable us to observe him as a soldier, and yet more as a soldier's friend, in the Netherlands.

From the State Paper Office documents I have also extracted several letters, entire or in part, as illustrative of the lives and characters of Sidney's parents, and of Queen Elizabeth's conduct towards them. One very long autobiographical letter, written by his father to his father-in-law, has supplied me with material incorporated in several chapters of this work. Since doing that, I have learnt that the whole has been printed, with notes by Mr. Herbert F. Hore, in successive numbers of *The Ulster Journal of Archæology*.

For a transcript of a considerable portion of the same document I am indebted to Mr. Robert Lemon, Assistant Keeper of Her Majesty's Records, to whom further, to Mr. H. C. Hamilton, also an Assistant Keeper of the Records, and to other gentlemen in the same Office, my thanks are due for ready help afforded to me in my consultation of the papers under their charge. Here, also, I beg to render thanks to my friend Mr. Thomas Brodribb, for his assistance in the collection and arrangement of part of the manuscript material which I have had occasion to employ.

To one friend, to Mr. Henry Morley—the friend of thousands by reason of his genial biographies of Bernard Palissy, of Jerome Cardan, and of Cornelius Agrippa, but my friend in a much closer and dearer sense—I owe far more than to any other. The help, in ways both of

counsel and of criticism, afforded by him in the preparation of this volume, is part only of a private debt, never to be paid in such poor coin as printed words.

H. R. Fox Bourne.

London, *March 8th*, 1862.

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A MEMOIR

OF

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.

1554—1568.

Sir Philip Sidney—beloved by the noblest, in days great with manly achievement, as a type of their earnest thought and heroic energy of action—was born on the 29th of November, 1554, at Penshurst, in Kent. Pleasantly situated in the valley of the Medway, the old mansion, modified by re-buildings and enlargements, is yet standing. Of all the pictures of the place as Sidney knew it, there is none so complete as Ben Jonson's. Not, he says, for its polished pillars or a roof of gold, for lantern, stair, or courts, that ancient pile had reverence. Dear was it to him for its homely charms and its pleasant memories. He looked not more lovingly upon the house in which his patron dwelt than upon the oak—now hollow and broad—which grew

from an acorn, planted at Sidney's birth. "Thou joy'st," he sings of Penshurst,—

"Thou joy'st in better marks, of soil and air,
Of wood, of water, therein thou art fair.
Thou hast thy walks for health as well as sport;
Thy mount, to which the Dryads do resort,
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,
Beneath the broad beech and the chestnut shade;
That taller tree—which, as a nut, was set
At his great birth, where all the Muses met.
* * * * *
The lower land, that to the river bends,
Thy sheep, thy bullocks, kine and calves do feed;
The middle ground thy mares and horses breed.
Each bank doth yield thee conies; and the tops
Fertile of wood, ashore, and Sidney's copse,
To crown thy open table, doth provide
The purpled pheasant, with the speckled side.
The painted partridge lies in every field,
And, for thy mess, is willing to be kill'd.
And if the high-swoll'n Medway fail thy dish,
Thou hast thy ponds that pay thee tribute fish.
* * * * *
Thou hast thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
Fresh as the air, and new as are the hours.
The early cherry, with the later plum,
Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come.
The blushing apricot and woolly peach
Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.
And, though thy walls be of the county stone,
They're reared with no man's ruin—no man's groan;
There's none that dwell about them wish them down,
But all come in, the farmer and the clown,
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord and lady, though they have no suit."

The lord who, with his lady, merited Ben Jonson's praise, was Robert, second Earl of Leicester, Sir Philip Sidney's brother. But by his parents, eulogy like this was yet more fully earned.

From them he inherited a rich store of family renown. His name is traced back to the year 1154, when King Henry the Second, coming from Anjou, brought with him one William Sidney, a knight, to whom he granted the manor of Sutton, in consideration of his service in battle, and, at a later date, further reward in land for holding office as chamberlain to the King.* In lineal descent from him was another William Sidney, chamberlain to King Henry the Eighth, and, throughout his reign, a zealous servant of the State. Of the English force sent in 1510 to aid the King of Spain against the Moors, he was one of the commanders. Two years later, he was off Brest in the squadron of five-and-twenty ships that made havoc of the great fleet of France. In the next year, though the French war was not prosperous, William Sidney fought well in it. He was knighted before August, when he commanded the right wing of the army victorious at Flodden Field. For such services as these he had, among his rewards, the grant of Penshurst, and as lord of Penshurst he was to Edward the Sixth, from his birth to the time of his coronation, tutor, chamberlain, and steward. He died in 1554.† Ten months after his death, Henry, the only surviving son, aged twenty-five, became the father of our hero.

Henry was born on the 21st day of March, 1529. "This right famous, renowned, worthy, virtuous,

* Collins, *Introduction to the Sidney Papers*, p. 76. Collins is my chief authority concerning Sir Philip Sidney's pedigree.

† Collins, pp. 77, 78, 82.

and heroical knight," says one of his friends, "by father and mother very nobly descended, was from his infancy bred and brought up in the prince's court and in nearness to his person, used familiarly, even as a companion."* And he himself tells us that, before he was eight years old, he held the child's office of henchman to Henry the Eighth. After which, he goes on to say, pleasantly showing how entirely the King's baby was a family possession of the † Sidneys, "I was, by that most famous King, put to his sweet son Prince Edward, my most dear master, prince, and sovereign; my near

* Hollingshed, vol. iii. p. 1548.

† The following table shows Sir Philip's lineage by the father's side :—

Sir William Sidney, Knt., Chamberlain to King Henry II. Died 1188, buried in Lewes Abbey.

Sir Simon Sidney, died 1213.

Roger Sidney, Esquire, died 1239.

Sir Henry Sidney, died 1268.

Sir Henry Sidney, died 1309.

Sir William Sidney.

John Sidney, Esquire.

Sir William Sidney.

John Sidney, Esquire.

William Sidney, Esquire.

William Sidney, Esquire.

Sir William Sidney, of Stoke Dabernon, Knight.

Nicholas Sidney, Esquire.

Sir William Sidney, of Penshurst, born 1482, died 1554.

Sir Henry Sidney, born 1529, died 1586, m. *Lady Mary Dudley*.	Mary, m. Sir W. Dormer.	Lucy, m. Sir John Harrington.	Anne, m. Sir William Fitz-William of Milton.	Frances, m Thomas Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex.

Sir Philip Sidney, Knight, born 1554, died 1586.	Mary, m. Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke.	Margaret, died quite young.	An infant, died quite young.	Ambrozia, died 1575.	Robert Sidney, Second Earl of Leicester, born 1563.	Colone Thomas Sidney.

kinswoman being his only nurse ; my father being his chamberlain ; my mother his governess ; my aunt in such place as, among meaner personages, is called a dry nurse,—for, from the time he left sucking, she continually lay in bed with him, so long as he remained in women's government. As the prince grew in years and discretion, so grew I in favour and liking of him."*

Soon after Edward became King, Henry Sidney was made one of the four principal Gentlemen of the Royal Bedchamber, partly, we learn, because of the singular love and entire affection which his sovereign bare him, partly because he was then reputed for "comeliness of person, gallantness and liveliness of spirit, virtue, quality, beauty, and good composition of body, the only odd man and paragon of the Court."† In 1550 he was knighted, in company with William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley. In the same year, though not yet one-and-twenty, he was employed as ambassador to France on important matters, performing his charge, it is recorded, "with singular commendation, wisdom, spirit, and dexterity."‡ Upon his return he was appointed chief cup-bearer to the king, and, soon afterwards, royal cypherer, with a stipend of fifty marks a year. Other honours were conferred upon him : chie of all, on the 18th of May, 1553, he was licensed to

* State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1, folio 38. This is a most valuable letter, written in 1583, by Sir Henry Sidney to Sir Francis Walsingham. It occupies eighty folio pages, equal to about twice as many pages of this volume, and is full of welcome autobiographical information.

† Hollingshed, vol. iii. p. 1548.

‡ Ibid.

put into livery, as retainers in his service, fifty gentlemen and yeomen. By the same document he was forgiven all his trespasses, forfeitures, penalties, outstanding debts, and whatever else amiss was by him done or perpetrated since Edward's coronation day.*

On the 7th of July following, King Edward died at Greenwich. After uttering that noble prayer, which closed with the entreaty, "Oh, my Lord God, defend this realm from Papistry, and maintain Thy true religion, that I and Thy people may praise Thy holy name!" he said, "I am faint; Lord, have mercy upon me, and take my spirit!" Then, looking towards Sir Henry Sidney, he fell into his arms, and so expired.†

Sir Henry, after the death of his royal friend, retired to Penshurst, where his father, with but a few months more to live, yet resided; where, also, about a year before, he had formed for himself a new home. At some time in 1552 he had married Lady Mary Dudley, daughter of the Duke of Northumberland, a connection of which Philip was proud. "I am a Dudley in blood," he declared; "that duke's daughter's son; and do acknowledge,—though, in all truth, I may justly affirm that I am, by my father's side, of ancient and always well-esteemed and well-matched gentry,—yet I do acknowledge, I say, that my chiefest honour is to be a Dudley."‡

On his mother's side, through twelve generations, Sir Philip Sidney claimed descent from one Robert de

* Collins, *Introduction*, pp. 83, 84.

† Hollingshed, vol. iii. pp. 1084, 1548.

‡ *Defence of the Earl of Leicester*, written probably in 1585.

L'Isle, who, having joined arms with the discontented barons against King John, was deprived of his lands until the accession of Henry the Third. His son and namesake, sharing the love of liberty which brought his father into trouble, fought under Simon de Montfort in the second barons' war. Warren, his son, was renowned for his share in the Scottish expeditions of the First and Second Edwards. But when the De Spencers became masters of Edward the Second, Warren was a companion in arms with the other nobles. Taken prisoner at Boroughbridge, he was sentenced, in 1322, to be drawn and hanged. Edward the Third's accession, however, restored honour to the family, and Gerard de L'Isle, who took foremost rank in the contests with Robert Bruce, shared in the victory of Cressy. With singular frequency, the succession then passed through a line of women. In this way the family became connected with the Berkeleys, Warwicks, Talbots, Greys, and at length Dudleys. In 1495, Elizabeth de L'Isle was given in marriage to the Edmund Dudley of whom Lord Bacon said, that "he was an eminent man, and one that could put hateful business into good language." His contemporaries thought no better of the business for the language. He it was who, together with Sir Richard Empson, aided Henry the Seventh in his unlawful appropriations of the wealth of the land. On that account Dudley was beheaded in 1509, the family estates and dignities being thus forfeited. Soon, however, restitution was made to his son John, who earned for himself the titles of Baron de L'Isle, Earl of Warwick, and Duke of Northumberland. The story is well

known of his ambition, and of the ruin it brought upon himself and some of his kin. On the 22nd of August, 1553, he was executed for the crowning of Lady Jane Grey. On the 12th of February, in the next year, that unfortunate lady and her husband, Guildford Dudley, suffered at the scaffold. Of Northumberland's other sons, John, Ambrose, and Robert were imprisoned for supposed implication in the plot. Ambrose and Robert survived to become prominent in Elizabeth's reign, the one as Earl of Leicester, the other as Earl of Warwick. John went from the Tower direct to Penshurst, and there, on the 21st of October, three days after his release, he died.*

* The following table shows Sir Philip's lineage by the mother's side :—

Ralph de L'Isle.

Ralph de L'Isle.

Robert de L'Isle (circa 1216), m. Isabella, daughter of Warren Fitz-Warren, Lord of Heyford-Warine.

Warren de L'Isle, hanged 1322.

Gerard de L'Isle, 1299–1360.

Warren de L'Isle, d. 1382.

Margaret, 1361–1392, m. Thomas, Lord Berkeley, d. 1415.

Elizabeth, b. 1385, m. Richard, Earl of Warwick, d. 1439.

Margaret, m. John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury.

John Talbot, Viscount L'Isle.

Thomas Talbot, 1442–1471. | *Elizabeth*, m. Edward Grey, Baron and Viscount L'Isle, d. 1492. | Margaret.

John, Viscount L'Isle, d. 1504, m. Muriel, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk. | Margaret. | Anne. | *Elizabeth*, m. Edmund Dudley, 1643–1509.

John, Vicount L'Isle, Earl of Warwick, Duke of Northumberland, 1501–1553, m. Lady Jane Guildford, d. 1555. | Andrew, d. 1559. | Jerome. | Elizabeth.

Henry, 1526–1544. | *John*, Earl of Warwick, d. 1554. | *Ambrose*, Earl of Warwick, Baron L'Isle, 1530–1590. | *Robert*, Earl of Leicester, 1532–1588. | Lord *Guildford Dudley*, m. Lady Jane Grey, d. 1553. | Henry, d. 1557. | *Mary*, d. 1586, m. *Sir Henry Sidney*. | *Catherine*, m. the Earl of Huntingdon.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

Thus there was gloom at Penshurst when Philip was born. Within fifteen months, one grandfather had brought an honoured life to a timely close; the other had been beheaded—cowardly recantation on his lips. One uncle had been sent to the block for foolish compliance with the crime of others; a second had exchanged a prison for a death-bed. Lady Mary Sidney could not have sympathised with the treason which had brought disgrace upon her family, and, if so, some shame was joined with her sorrow. But she had also ground of comfort. Her husband was both just and politic in holding to the better and the stronger cause. Sir Henry Sidney did nothing which could either hurt his credit with posterity or offend his lawful sovereign. Although, as he tells us, "neither liking nor liked as he had been," * he continued to be an honest servant of the State, and to be thought well of at Court. By a charter of Queen Mary's, dated the 8th of November, 1554, all his former honours and offices were confirmed to him; and the child, born three weeks afterwards, was christened Philip, in honour of Queen Mary's husband.

Philip was the first-born; nursed tenderly by a mother of rare womanly worth, prudently watched over by a father rightly famous for honesty and wisdom. With his little sister Mary, his junior by a year, he rambled through Penshurst woods, and about "that lower land which to the river bends," of which Ben Jonson speaks, while martyr-flames were rising high, and English air

* State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1.

was thick with sighs and curses. Great men, heavy-hearted at the misery which had fallen upon the land, were the guests of his parents, and he must have listened to their earnest, mournful talk. Cecil may have spoken shrewd, memorable words to him; and Ascham, the best witness to her wit, and grace, and learning, may have told him pleasant stories about Lady Jane, his aunt. But of his father he saw not very much.

Sir Henry Sidney was a busy workman for his country's weal. The scene of his most important action was Ireland. Thither he was sent in April, 1556, as Vice-Treasurer-General of the Royal Revenues, in company with Lord Fitz-Walter, the new Lord Deputy. In July he marched victoriously against the Scots of Ulster, slaying with his own hand James MacConnel, their leader. He was afterwards appointed Lord Justice of Ireland, and in 1558, when Elizabeth became Queen, his offices were confirmed.*

There is an interval of five years, during most of which he served the State as Lord President of Wales, doing much to organize the government of the principality, to improve its defences, and to set in motion suitable reforms. In May, 1562, a deputy was appointed for him while he went as ambassador, first to France, and afterwards to Scotland—already disturbed by Queen Mary Stuart's recent return to her sovereignty.† On the 14th of the following May he was installed

* Collins, p. 85.

† State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxiii. No. 20.

Knight of the Garter, having Charles the Ninth of France for companion in the honour.*

Meanwhile, affairs in Ireland were growing every year more complicated. In 1560, the Earl of Sussex had been sent over to enforce Protestantism upon the Catholics. The unjust order was unwisely executed, and rebellion soon broke out in ever-turbulent Ulster. O'Neil—for whom, in the days of his submission, the title had been invented of "O'Neil the Great, cousin to Saint Patrick, friend to the Queen of England, and enemy to all the world besides,"†—promptly seized the occasion, and sought by it to secure his independence. He gathered a formidable army, and sent despatches to foreign sovereigns as being a monarch like themselves. To check him and restore order there was need of a prudent governor, and the Queen's choice fell upon Sir Henry Sidney. On the 13th of October, 1565, he was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, and exactly three months afterwards he arrived in Dublin, having been detained by shipwreck, in which, he says, "I lost the most of my household stuff and utensils, my wife's whole apparel, and all her jewels, many horses, and stable-stuff."‡

He found that of all the northern and western parts of Ireland, O'Neil had made himself master. "The Queen had nothing in possession in all this large tract of land but the miserable town of Carrickfergus, whose goods

* Regist. Garter, pp. 377, 378.

† Campian, *History of Ireland* (Dublin, 1809), p. 189.

‡ State Paper Office. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1, fo. 1.

he would take as oft as he listed, and force the poor people to redeem their own cows with their own wine. He held the county of Louth in such awe that he made the most of them to pay him tribute, called there 'black rent,' or else, by death or force, he would plague them. With this monstrous monarchical tyrant," wrote Sir Henry Sidney, "I made war; and, in truth, he was mighty, for he had of Scots and Irish seven thousand men that ware weapons. I had but seventeen hundred, with three hundred Berwick soldiers. I advanced into the rebel's country on the 22nd of September, 1566. I wasted or destroyed all or most part of Tyrone. I passed without boat or bridge the dangerous rivers of Omagh, Darg, and Finn. Here the rebel, with all his power, showed himself unto me, but fight with me he durst not, and made some bravado to my camp, but enter it he could not. At last I came to the great water, or sea-arm, of Loch Foyle, where I found boats, as I had appointed, to convey me and my army over. So I left Tyrone and entered Tyrconnel, where I found a regiment of seven hundred soldiers, full well captained, chosen, and appointed. There at an old church I made a new town,"—since grown into Londonderry,—"and, being well furnished with men, munition, and victual, I left the regiment in it, and marched through Tyrconnel, a country of seventy miles in length, and somewhere forty broad, full of hard passages and dangerous rivers. By the way, I left not one castle in possession of the rebel nor unrestored to the right owner." In this way the Lord Deputy travelled on and down through Donegal, and Fermanagh, and Leitrim, and Sligo. "From

thence," to continue the story in his own vigorous words, "to Roscommon, the strong castle of which was, with some ado, delivered me, being in the possession of disloyal Irishmen a hundred and sixty years; for so long was it before that it was betrayed, and the English constable and ward murdered, as I found in the Irish chronicles. There I planted a small garrison, which hath continued ever since; and what good service the same hath done for the reformation of the province, with continuance of residence, with rent and profit, and how good a town is now builded about it, I am sure you know better than I can inform you."

With this long progress, the summer and autumn were very well occupied. But as soon as Sir Henry Sidney had passed out of the northern counties, the rebels took heart again. O'Neil gathered an army and treacherously proceeded to Drogheda, where Lady Sidney was waiting, and her danger seemed very great. Yet the small garrison fought manfully, and gained the day. The regiment at Derry also battled with rare bravery. "Seeing these good adventures achieved by others," Sir Henry went on to say, "I, being absent from them, thought I would not be idle. Between the end of November and the beginning of Lent following, I made many incursions into his country, sometimes as low as Dungannon, and with such diligence, as my avant couriers have sworn to me that they have felt his couch warm where he lay that night, and yet their luck not to light on him. In the Christmas holidays I visited him in the heart of his country, where he had made as great an assembly as he could, and had provided as

great and good cheer as was to be had in the country. And when word was brought him that I was so near him, 'That is not possible,' quoth he, 'for the day before yesterday I know he dined and sat under his cloth of state in the hall of Kilmaynham.' 'By O'Neil's hand,' quoth the messenger, 'he is in this country, and not far off, for I saw the red bractoc with the knotty club, that is carried before none but himself,' meaning my pensile with the ragged staff.* With that he ran away, and so I shortened his Christmas, and made an end of mine own with abundance of his good provision, but not provided for such an unbidden guest as I was. This, I think, was the eighth or ninth inroad I made upon him, encamping sometimes two, three, or four nights in the country; and how pleasant a life it is that time of the year, with hunger, and after sore travail, to harbour long and cold nights in cabins made of boughs and covered with grass, I leave to your indifferent judgment. Thus, and by these means, I brought him very low." The ending of the war is thoroughly Irish. After some months of further fighting, O'Neil's cause grew hopeless. He fell into the society of some seeming friends, and they gave him good entertainment, until occasion arose for treachery; then they cut off his head, and presently Sir Henry Sidney received it "pickled in a pipkin."

"But the devil never sleeps," was the Lord Deputy's finding. The Earl of Ormond, one of the few Irish nobles who resided at the English Court, and who thought that his courtly bearing before the Queen

* The badge of the Dudleys, adopted by Sir Henry Sidney upon his marriage with a daughter of the house.

entitled him to unchecked authority in his own wild dominions, used all his influence with Elizabeth for gaining his wishes, and especially for having his rival, the Earl of Desmond, crushed. Because her suitor was a handsome man and a zealous flatterer, the Queen willingly gave ear to his arguments, and sent suitable directions to the Lord Deputy. In answer to his reports of the victories gained in the north, Sidney received complaints that he was not looking after Ormond's interests in the comparatively peaceable south. In the midst of his hard fighting and rapid travelling, he did all that was in his power. He appointed agents to investigate, and skilful committees to consider the position of affairs, and advise on the best mode of procedure. They stated that both earls were at fault, that each was vehemently struggling for his own selfish interests, regardless alike of the duty which he owed to the Queen and of the claims of his poor oppressed dependents. "Albeit they would inveigh against each other, yet if any sentence passed for the advancement of the Queen's prerogative, or suppression of either of their tyrannies, straightway it was cried out of and complained of to the Queen, specially by the Earl of Ormond, as injustice and oppression."

This state of things, lasting at intervals through a dozen years, must be borne steadily in mind, as being the key to the whole of Sir Henry Sidney's career, and to an important element in the history of his son, Philip. Out of the Lord Deputy's honest dealing sprang much worldly disaster to both father and son; and it had fairly begun in this winter of 1566 and 1567.

"I received," said Sir Henry, "many a bitter letter, which indeed tried me, and so perplexed my most dear wife, as she fell most grievously sick upon the same, and in that sickness remained once in a trance above fifty-two hours; upon whose recovery I sent her into England, where she lived till my coming over."*

Meanwhile the Lord Deputy set himself to study carefully the condition of the southern part of the island, and to consider the best means of bettering it, keeping especially in his mind the quarrelsome tempers of Ormond and Desmond. In the early months of 1567 he made a tour through the south and west, and of his observations there is welcome record in a letter which he sent to Queen Elizabeth. In Queen's County and Kilkenny he found good order prevailing, and in Waterford the people were for the most part friendly, though "ready to play the part of the washed swine in returning to her foul puddle, unless continuance of justice amongst them detain them from it." As he proceeded, the spectacle grew more appalling. "As I never was in a more pleasant country in all my life, so never saw I a more waste and desolate land," than from Youghal to Limerick. In Connaught the case was still worse. The Earl of Clanricarde had two wives living, and their two sons wasted the country in strife as to who should be heir. "From Galway I travelled through a great and ancient town in Connaught, called Athenry, where I was offered a pitiful and lamentable present, namely, the keys of the town,

* State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1.

not as to receive them of me again, as all other accustomably do, but for me still to keep, or otherwise dispose at my pleasure; inasmuch as they were so impoverished by the extortion of the lords about them as they were no longer able to keep that town. The town is large and well walled, and it appeareth, by matter of record, there hath been in it three hundred good householders, and since I knew this land there was twenty, and now I find but four, and they poor, and, as I write, ready to leave the place. The cry and lamentation of the poor people was great and pitiful and nothing but thus;—'Succour, succour, succour!'" *

Succour was given, to the utmost of his power, by the wise Lord Deputy. "The only way," he said, "for reformation of these two provinces, was by planting justice by presidents and councils in each." This he subsequently attempted to do, and did in some measure. First, however, he returned to England, partly because of "the sharp and bitter letters which," he said, "I almost weekly received out of England, by the procurement of the Earl of Ormond," partly on account of his health, which was altogether impaired by the hard work that he had lately undertaken.†

This resting-time of Sir Henry Sidney's is chiefly memorable to us because it affords the starting-point for detailed knowledge of his son's career. Since the 16th of November, 1564, when he was just finishing his tenth year, Philip had been at school in

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. pp. 18—31.

† A very curious document on the state of Sir Henry Sidney's health is printed by Collins, *Introduction*, pp. 93—95.

Shrewsbury.* While holding office as Lord President of Wales, Sir Henry had lived in state at Ludlow Castle, situated on the southern border of Shropshire. Thence Shrewsbury was not thirty miles distant, and he seems to have visited it more than once in every year. It was not only the nearest and most available town in which trustworthy schooling was to be had, but contained one of the best schools in England.† The master, Thomas Ashton, was a man famous in his day for his learning and good sense. He had been educated at Oxford at about the same time as Sir Henry Sidney. Perhaps the two had been college friends ; at any rate, the President thought highly of the schoolmaster to whose care he entrusted his son during his absence in Ireland.

Philip was a sturdy little workman, apt and zealous in all scholarly acquirements. In those days schooling began and ended sooner than it does now. But among

* Under that day his name is entered in the school-register, together with that of Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, his life-long friend and first biographer.—*Sidneiana* (Roxburghe Club, 1837), p. 1.

† Camden's contemporary account of Shrewsbury is interesting. "At this day," he says, "it is a fine city, well inhabited, and of good commerce ; and by the industry of the citizens, and their cloth manufacture and their trade with the Welsh, is very rich ; for hither the Welsh commodities are brought as to the common mart of both nations. Its inhabitants are partly English, partly Welsh. They use both languages. And this, among other things, must be mentioned to their highest praise—that they have erected the largest school in all England for the education of youth ; for which Thomas Ashton, the first schoolmaster, a person of great worth and integrity, provided, by his own industry, a competent salary."—*Britannia* (1586).

his comrades Philip was notable for the early ripeness of his mind. "Of his youth," wrote his schoolfellow, college companion, and lifelong friend, Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, "I will report no other wonder but this, that though I lived with him and knew him from a child, yet I never knew him other than a man; with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years; his talk ever of knowledge, and his very play tending to enrich his mind, so as even his teachers found something in him to observe and learn, above that which they had usually read or taught. Which eminence by nature and industry made his worthy father style Sir Philip in my hearing, though I unseen, *lumen familiæ suæ.*"*

Light of the household indeed! Sir Henry Sidney was proud of his son. From very early years he designed to train him to be an ambassador and a statesman, to follow a course in life kindred to his own. We are able to read his thought about the boy in a letter which he wrote to him from Ireland, and when he was barely more than eleven years old.† The letter is so indicative of the character of both father and son, so characteristic also of the noblest tendencies of the age, that it must be quoted entire. Sir Henry Sidney

* *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney* (ed. 1652), pp. 6, 7.

† There is no date to the letter, but it is traditionally, and I imagine rightly, assigned to the year 1566. It is not likely to have been written earlier, seeing how much intelligence it supposes in the boy; and not very long after, as we shall see, he was removed from Shrewsbury.

was too busy a man to set down useless words. He let eleven years go by without once writing to the child whom he loved tenderly. But when he did write, it was to compress a whole code of Christian, manly duty into a few pithy sentences, which the lad was to con earnestly, to read over every four or five days until each word was fixed upon his memory, and then to spend a life-time in translating into action. A pedagogue could teach Philip to write letters in French and Latin before he was twelve years old: his father sought only to put the man's soul into his learning.

"I have received," wrote Sir Henry Sidney, "two letters from you, one written in Latin, the other in French; which I take in good part, and wish you to exercise that practice of learning often; for that will stand you in most stead, in that profession of life that you are born to live in. And since this is my first letter that ever I did write to you, I will not that it be all empty of some advices which my natural care of you provoketh me to wish you to follow, as documents to you in this your tender age. Let your first action be the lifting up of your mind to Almighty God, by hearty prayer; and feelingly digest the words you speak in prayer, with continual meditation and thinking of Him to whom you pray, and of the matter for which you pray. And use this as an ordinary act, and at an ordinary hour; whereby the time itself shall put you in remembrance to do that which you are accustomed to do in that time. Apply your study to such hours as your discreet master doth assign you, earnestly; and the time I know he will so limit, as shall be both sufficient for your learning and safe for your health. And mark the sense and the matter of that you read, as well as the words. So shall you both enrich your tongue with words, and your wit with matter; and judgment will grow as years groweth in you. Be humble and obedient to your master, for unless you frame yourself to obey others, yea, and feel in yourself what obedience is, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you. Be courteous of gesture, and affable to all men, with diversity of reverence, according to the dignity of the person: there is nothing that winneth so much

with so little cost. Use moderate diet, so as, after your meal, you may find your wit fresher and not duller, and your body more lively and not more heavy. Seldom drink wine; and yet sometimes do, lest, being enforced to drink upon the sudden, you should find yourself enflamed. Use exercise of body, yet such as is without peril of your joints or bones: it will increase your force, and enlarge your breath. Delight to be cleanly, as well in all parts of your body as in your garments: it shall make you grateful in each company, and otherwise loathsome. Give yourself to be merry; for you degenerate from your father, if you find not yourself most able in wit and body and to do anything when you be most merry: but let your mirth be ever void of all scurrility and biting words to any man, for a wound given by a word is oftentimes harder to be cured than that which is given with the sword. Be you rather a hearer and bearer away of other men's talk than a beginner and procurer of speech; otherwise you shall be counted to delight to hear yourself speak. If you hear a wise sentence or an apt phrase, commit it to your memory with respect of the circumstance when you shall speak it. Let never oath be heard to come out of your mouth, nor word of ribaldry: detest it in others; so shall custom make to yourself a law against it in yourself. Be modest in each assembly; and rather be rebuked of light fellows for maiden-like shamefastness, than of your sad friends for pert boldness. Think upon every word that you will speak before you utter it, and remember how nature hath ramparted up, as it were, the tongue with teeth, lips, yea, and hair without the lips, and all betokening reins or bridles for the loose use of that member. Above all things tell no untruth; no, not in trifles: the custom of it is naughty. And let it not satisfy you that, for a time, the hearers take it for truth; for after it will be known as it is, to your shame: for there cannot be a greater reproach to a gentleman than to be accounted a liar. Study and endeavour yourself to be virtuously occupied: so shall you make such a habit of well-doing in you, that you shall not know how to do evil, though you would. Remember, my son, the noble blood you are descended of, by your mother's side; and think that only by virtuous life and good action you may be an ornament to that illustrious family; and otherwise, through vice and sloth, you shall be counted *labes generis*—one of the greatest curses that can happen to man. Well, my little Philip, this is enough for me, and too much, I fear, for you. But if I shall find that this light meal of digestion nourish anything in the weak stomach of your capacity, I will, as I find the same grow stronger, feed it

with tougher food. Your loving father, so long as you live in the fear of God.

"H. SIDNEY."*

So worthily, as a father mindful of his trust, wrote the Lord President himself. Then followed "a postscript by my Lady Sidney, in the skirts of my Lord President's letter, to her said son Philip."

"Your noble and careful father hath taken pains with his own hand to give you, in this his letter, so wise, so learned, and most requisite precepts, for you to follow with a diligent and humble, thankful mind, as I will not withdraw your eyes from beholding and reverently honouring the same; no, not so long time as to read any letter from me. And therefore, at this time, I will write unto you no other letter than this; whereby I first bless you with my desire to God to plant in you His grace; and secondarily warn you to have always before the eyes of your mind these excellent counsels of my lord, your dear father, and that you fail not continually, once in four or five days, to read them over. And for a final leave-taking for this time, see that you show yourself as a loving, obedient scholar to your good master to govern you yet many years; and that my lord and I may hear that you profit so in your learning as thereby you may increase our loving care for you, and deserve at his hands the continuance of his great joy, to have him often witness with his own hand the hope he hath in your well-doing. Farewell, my little Philip; and once again, the Lord bless you! Your loving mother,

"MARY SIDNEY."†

Letter and postscript were written doubtless during Sir Henry Sidney's Irish employment, in 1566. He returned to England in October, 1567, and made a stay of ten months' length. For some part of this time he was busy at the Court, rendering account of the work which he had done, justifying himself against the charges

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i., pp. 8, 9.

† *Harleian Miscellany* (1812), vol. ix. pp. 447, 448.

of the Earl of Ormond, and receiving instructions as to what he should do on his return. Doubtless he also gave some leisure to inspecting the affairs of Wales, for of that principality he continued to be Lord President, his work being done by a deputy, during his Irish employment. His health was greatly broken, and, in obedience to physicians' orders, he observed as much quiet as possible. It is enough for us to know that he did not neglect the affairs of his son Philip, whom he removed from Master Ashton's school at Shrewsbury, about Midsummer, or a few months earlier, and entered at Oxford as a student of Christ Church.

CHAPTER II.

UNDERGRADUATE YEARS.

1568—1572.

At the universities there had been, in Queen Mary's day, decay of learning. From Ascham we hear of the failing knowledge of the tongues and the perverted way of study. "Sophistry," he says, "not well, not old, but that new rotten sophistry, began to beard and shoulder logic. Also in outward behaviour then began simplicity in apparel to be laid aside, courtly gallantness to be taken up. Contention in youth was nowhere for learning, factions in the elders were everywhere for trifles."* By Elizabeth's accession there came increase to the courtliness of manners that offended Ascham's simple taste; but with it was revival of good scholarship. Not only was there a breaking down of bars against free thought: the Queen herself kept watch over the schools. In the autumn of 1564 she visited Cambridge, where her great Secretary of State, Sir William Cecil, was chancellor; and two years later she inspected Oxford University, then under the chancellorship of Philip Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester. We may look to the details of this latter visitation for

* *The Schoolmaster.*

a sufficient sketch of one part of university life while Philip was preparing for his entrance at Christ Church.

Her Majesty reached Oxford on Saturday night, the 31st of August. The new Chancellor and the doctors in their robes went forth to meet and conduct her through the city gates. There she was received by the mayor and aldermen, who tendered her a gilt cup and forty pounds in gold. Speeches and orations were made without number. To one, delivered in Greek, the learned sovereign replied in the same tongue. At church she heard a Te Deum chaunted on her behalf, and after that she went to her lodgings. Next day, being Sunday, as she was not well enough to attend morning service, admission to her presence was granted to Peter Carew, a handsome, clever boy, who had just entered the University. He came to speak a Latin address, and this he did so prettily that the Queen bade him go through it again. In the afternoon she went to church ; and in the evening a Latin play, called *Marcus Geminus*, was acted before her. The following four days were spent in listening to more oratory, in attending several learned disputations, and in visiting the various colleges. Her Majesty talked kindly with the students, and wisely counselled them as to their work. In the evenings she tested their skill in another sort of exercise. She saw the play of *Palamon and Arcite*, written by Master Richard Edwards, and acted by members of the University, young Carew, it seems, being Emilia. Though a very tame doggrel of tragedy mixed with coarse comedy, it greatly pleased Elizabeth and her courtiers. They also

witnessed what they regarded as the less agreeable performance of *Progne*, a morality composed by Doctor James Calfhill. On Friday, the 6th of September, the Queen left Oxford with a "Farewell, thou worthy University of Oxford; farewell, my good subjects; farewell, my dear scholars; pray God prosper your studies; farewell, farewell!"*

Her Majesty's sweet, affable, and noble bearing all through this visit, we are told, made a great impression on the minds of the students. It caused rare emulation in their studies, and no way was left untrodden wherein they could hope to approach her favour and become acceptable in her eyes.† There was talk of another inspection exactly two years later, when Elizabeth passed Oxford on the road from Wallingford to Bicester, but it does not appear to have been made.

Meanwhile, Philip Sidney had been introduced to the University. Of the precise date we have no record, but it must have been either at or shortly before the midsummer of 1568. His father was in Oxford on the 2nd of August, on which day we find that he was created honorary Master of Arts, and that he lodged at Christ Church,‡ the college of which Philip was for some years a member. There can be no doubt as to the objects of his visit. He came to see what progress his son had made in his studies, and to take him back to Ludlow,§ whither Cecil wrote to

* Wood, *Annals of Oxford* (ed. by Gutch, 1796), pp. 154—163.
† Ibid., p. 163.
‡ Wood, *Fasti Oxonienses* (ed. by Bliss, 1815), Part i. col. 183.
§ *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. pp. 34, 35.

him on the 9th of August, sending his compliments to Lady Sidney and the darling Philip.*

The darling Philip, not yet fourteen years old, had already won boyish fame. "You have offended many," said the great Secretary of State in a playful letter which he wrote on the 3rd of September to Sir Henry Sidney, who had by that time gone to resume his Lord Deputyship of Ireland. "There is one thing that is heavy for you to bear, considering you have therein offended many. You carried away your son and my scholar from Oxford, not only from his books, but from the commodity to have been seen of my lords, his uncles, and to have been approved by me, and to have pleasured both me and my wife. I think, indeed, either you forgat the Queen's progress to be so near Oxford, or else you have some matter of necessity to allege, both for your taking him from Oxford, and for your detaining of him so long in wild Wales."†

Sir Henry's reason for detaining Philip some three or four weeks in Wales, or rather in Shropshire, was a good one. He naturally wished to have his son with him for a little while before starting for Dublin, on an errand which might banish him for years. And in this holiday Philip had more natural and wholesome satisfaction than he would have found in the small excitement of a Royal progress. But it is pleasant to think that even now, boy as he was, he stood high in

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxv. No. 63.

† Ibid., vol. xxv. No. 75.

the esteem of wise men, and was thought kindly of by them, that when absent he could be missed, not only by his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, and by many other courtiers, but even by so busy a man as Sir William Cecil.

Between the Cecils and the Sidneys there was at this time very close friendship. Sir Henry had not been long absent from England before Sir William found time to run down either to Ludlow or to Penshurst, on a visit to Lady Sidney. "I most heartily thank you," wrote her husband to the Secretary, on the last day of November, "for your courteous visitation of my wife; and I pray you sometimes hearken of our boy, and be working how to get home the father." Then he ended his letter with "most hearty commendations to yourself, my lady, and my sweet jewel, your daughter."*

Perhaps Cecil did try to bring home the Lord Deputy from business which, considering the Queen's cruel thanklessness, and his own broken health, was harder than he cared to undertake; yet it is not very likely, for the Secretary knew the great value of the public service his friend was then doing in Ireland. But Sir Henry's other request he could and did gladly obey. Eleven days before the date of the letter from which I have been last quoting, he had written to say that he expected Lady Sidney to come next Monday on a visit to his wife at Hampton Court,† where probably she kept Christmas.

If so, there Philip met her. Having returned to

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 40.

† State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxvi. No. 46.

Oxford in August or September, and having spent some months in hard work, we find him taking holiday at Hampton Court when the new year opened.* It was a memorable week in his life. Just past fourteen, and arrived at the new dignity of a college gown, he must have felt himself now fairly on the rise from boyhood to manhood. He was there as the friend of a family that might be thought well nigh the happiest in England.

Cecil was then in his fiftieth year. He had honourably held office as Principal Secretary of State, since Elizabeth's accession. The Queen, who had seen his prudence and fidelity tried thoroughly in the season of her adversity, loved him as her best friend, and trusted him as her best adviser now that her state was prosperous. The chief burden of the nation rested on him, and at the present moment especially, between home matters of great weight, sounds of rebellion in Ireland, of war in Scotland, and dangers of all kinds threatening in France and Flanders, there was enough to distract the head of a less wary and discriminating statesman. In a letter to Sir Henry Sidney he declared that he could think of nothing but what was absolutely needful, because of the "tub-full" of business which had to be disposed of.† But to the young man who was visiting him he found time to pay a hearty and affectionate attention. On the 6th of January, at the end of a long letter upon various government questions, he

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxvii. No. 2.

† Ibid., vol. xxvi. No. 48.

wrote to the Lord Deputy, "Your Philip is here, in whom I take more comfort than I do openly utter for avoiding of wrong interpretation. He is worthy to be loved, and so I do love him, as he were mine own."*

Philip had met Cecil often before, but it is likely that now for the first time he saw the Secretary's wife and daughter. Lady Mildred Cecil, at that time forty-three, was a daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke. In company with Lady Jane Grey, the Princess Elizabeth, and —as I would fain believe, and not without reason—Lady Mary Dudley, she had learned from Roger Ascham Greek and Latin, and all the lore which those languages contained; and of Greek, says her teacher, she knew more than any, save the Lady Jane. Her heart was as well trained as her intellect. The actions of her life revealed the unobtrusive piety that she practised, and the charities which she bestowed with a free hand told their own tale. Sorrow, too, had, with its sacred touch, added refinement to her noble character. One after another, the three children earliest born to her had died before they could call her by the name of mother. Three others were now living,—Robert, who inherited most of his father's titles and offices, Anne, and Elizabeth.

Anne, Sir Henry Sidney's "sweet jewel," was a year or so younger than Philip Sidney.† She was a pretty damsel, already giving proof of the wit and

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxvii. No. 2.

† She was a little child in 1557. On the 30th of November in that year, Sir Philip Hoby wrote to ask Lady Cecil to come and spend Christmas with his wife, and to bring "little Tannykin" with her. —State Paper Office, *Domestic Correspondence, Mary*, vol. xi. No. 30.

grace which were to be her main support through a very sorrowful career. As a girl, she was light-hearted enough, and doubtless Philip, who, as Ben Jonson tells us, was wont to wander in the woods, and—

> "cut the names
> Of many a sylvan token with his flames,"

was not lacking in appreciation of her charms. Doubtless, Lady Cecil and Lady Sidney, also, when they saw the youth and maiden pleasantly occupied with each other, enjoyed motherly talk about the two, and settled that they might both be worse matched.

Be that as it may, we find that, immediately after this holiday gathering, Sir Henry Sidney wrote from Dublin to make overtures of marriage between Philip and Anne. Cecil replied on the 2nd of February following. His letter—beginning with one of those vague prefatory sentences, which were as necessary to him as the "Sir" was to Doctor Johnson—is eminently characteristic :—

"My good Lord,

"If my power for doing, or my leisure for writing, were as some portion of my desire is to notify to you my good will, you should have as good proof thereof as I see you have in hope an assurance. I thank you for your free offer made to me by your letters concerning your son, whom truly I do so like for his own conditions and singular towardness in all good things, as I think you a happy father for so joyful a son. And as for the interest that it pleaseth you to offer me in him, I must confess, if the child alone were valued without the natural good that dependeth of you his father, I could not but think him worthy the love I bear him, which certainly is more than I do express outwardly, for avoiding of sinister interpretation. For, as for the accompt to have him my son, I see

so many incidenties, as it sufficeth me to love the child for himself, without regard therein of my daughter, whom surely I love so well as, so it be within my degree or not much above, I shall think none too good for her. Thus you see a father's fondness, which to a father I dare discover, and so for this time it sufficeth." *

Cecil's mind was spoken very plainly in that letter. He had real friendship for the Sidneys, both father and son; he had real love also for his pretty daughter. But it was not probable, he thought, that Philip would ever be rich enough or high enough in worldly rank to be a fit son-in-law to him. Anne's husband must be at least within her father's degree, if not above it. This fundamental principle of match-making was not at all peculiar to Sir William Cecil; but it formed part of the worldly-wisdom of which, notwithstanding his many good parts and his very great talents, he gave so notable an example. In this instance he had no wish to deny the possibility of marriage between his daughter and Philip, but he was not willing to contract it without a substantial consideration of property.

In this case, however, some such consideration appears to have been suggested. Philip's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, was consulted about it, and perhaps he openly gave warrant to an opinion current for the many years during which he had no lawful offspring, that his promising nephew was to be his heir. At any rate, the Earl either honestly entertained the thought, or spoke so ambiguously as to give the appearance of consent.

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxvii. No. 17.

Philip, meanwhile, was at Oxford. Early in the new year, he must have begun to work vigorously.

His college of Christ Church had been established, in or about the year 1525, by Cardinal Wolsey, who brought students from Cambridge to stock it. The splendid building, which it took four years to erect, was meant to immortalize the Cardinal's generosity and princely bearing.* When Sidney entered it, this college was accounted one of the most dignified, and perhaps the most industrious, in the university. His tutor was Doctor Thomas Thornton, a man of some repute in his own day for learning and good nature; "the common refuge," he was called, "of young poor scholars of great hopes and parts."† Sidney appears to have received instruction also from a Mr. Robert Dorset.‡

Of the details of his study there is no record. In his case, according to one old writer, "an excellent stalk met with the choicest grafts; nor could his tutors pour in so fast as he was ready to receive. All sorts of learning were so indifferently favoured by him, that each of them might allege arguments that he most reflected in his dearness upon them, insomuch that those that were to make a meal of learning, and so

* Wood, *History and Antiquities of the Colleges and Halls of Oxford* (ed. Gutch, 1786), pp. 425, 426.

† Zouch, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Sir Philip Sidney* (York, 1808), p. 31. Thornton directed to be placed over his tomb in Ledbury Church, Hereford, this inscription—"Juventutis lectissimæ, et inter alios Philippi Sidneii, equitis nobilissimi, accademicæ educationi præpositus erat."—Willis, *Cathedrals*, vol. ii. p. 679.

‡ Dorset left Oxford in 1576 and retired to Ewelme, in Oxfordshire, where he was tutor to Robert, Philip's younger brother. He was Dean of Chester in 1579, and died in 1580.—Zouch, p. 376.

have it for their fixed habitation, envied him who only took it *in transitu*, and, as it were, in complement in his passage to higher designs."* Of his achievements he himself thought less highly, as appears from a Latin letter which he wrote to Sir William Cecil on the 12th of March, 1569, to this effect:—

"Your marvellous kindnesses, quite undeserved by me, lead me, most excellent Sir, though I cannot do it fitly and as becomes me, to write this letter to you; but this certainly I do not that you may see what favourable progress I have made in my studies. For on this point, to speak truthfully, and not without heavy grief, I must confess that I can in no way satisfy either your expectation or my own desire. But I write this on purpose that I may not seem guilty of neglect towards one who has done me so many favours, and so show myself altogether unable to emulate his goodness. This is my reason then for troubling you, who are so busied about such weighty and extensive work, with my poor talk, that you may understand, as far as I can explain it, with what grateful memory I recall your kindnesses towards me; and I know that I shall never have any other thought than this. And I beseech you that what I am doing with the best intention you will receive in good part, and not condemn me for boldness and imprudence because I trouble you with a letter in order that you may know the mind which I have concerning you. The duties and the respect which I owe to you, and which I wish most heartily to perform, will bind me closely to you all life long, and always I shall set before myself, ever more and more eagerly, to find my happiness in deserving well of you. Farewell.

"Your most devoted,

"PHILIP SIDNEY."†

There is nothing very noteworthy about this letter—the first of Sidney's writing which is, as far as I know, extant. Written with the nervousness of youth, and

* *The Life and Death of Sir Philip Sidney*, prefixed to most early editions of the *Arcadia*.

† State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xlix. No. 63. As this first extant letter of Sidney's writing has

according to the practice of strong praise thought necessary in that day, it tells us very little of Philip as he really was. It confirms, however, the knowledge which we already have of the close intimacy between the Sidneys and the Cecils, and the obligation under which the former felt themselves to be with respect to the latter. There is another letter to the Secretary, written more pleasantly, and dated the 8th of July. In it Philip apologizes for his long silence when he

never yet been printed, it seems right to give the original in its schoolboy Latin :—

"To the righte honorable Sir William Cecill, knighte, her Maiesties principall Secretarie yeve These :

"Mirifica tua beneficia in me (nullo meo merito) cum infatissimè collato (egregie vir) faciunt ut (licet per tempus commòde et uti me decet non possim) hasce tamen ad te literas perscribam ; quod non èo quidem facio, ut inde queas diiudicare quantos progressus in literis gratius habeam. Quâ in re et vere et non sine gravi dolore meo fateor satisfacere me nullo modo posse, vel expectationi tuæ vel cupiditati meæ. Istas ante hoc consilio ad te nunc mitto, ne nomine negligentie ei suspectus sim, cujus in me tanta extant beneficia, ut si vitam pro eius dignitate profundam, nullam partem videar tuorum meritorum assequutus. Hæc igitur me una causa impulit, hasce ut ad te nunc dem, et ut meis ineptiis te summis gravissimisque occupationibus discentum, et implicatum iam interpellem, ut qua possum ratione intelligas, beneficia in me tua quam grata memoria colam : et ea ex animo meo excidere quâm nullo modo sinam. Te vero etiam atque etiam rogo, ut quod ab optima voluntate, sit profectum, id in bonam partem accipias, nec tam audaciam et temeritatem meam reprehendas, quæ tibi scribendo molestus sim, quam probes studium animumque in te meum, qui officii et observantiæ erga te meæ, quos possum libentissime velim, apud te testes deponere mihi quidem perfecto in omnia vitæ cursu, restam erit nulla proposita, quam ut quotidiè vehementius, de me optume meritum esse lœtere. Vale.

"Tibi deditissimus,

"Philippus Sidneius.

"Oxonii, 12° Martii, a° 1568." [O. S.]

might fairly have been expected to write. He thanks Sir William Cecil for all his favours to his father and himself, and ends by saying he would have written more, but that he knows not whether the busy Secretary cares for such long letters.*

Philip made no direct reference to his projected marriage with Anne Cecil. It would hardly have been seemly for him to do so; but it was doubtless in his mind. Meanwhile, the scheme was being considered and discussed in proper quarters. His uncle, the Earl of Leicester, was interesting himself in the affair, and even drawing up terms of marriage settlement; while Sir William Cecil and Sir Henry Sidney were approving of the same.† But it did not advance very rapidly. The young people were young enough to wait, and their parents had weightier and more pressing matters to attend to.

* British Museum, *Lansdowne MSS.* II. No. xi. Art. 77, cited by Zouch.

† State Paper Office, MS., *Irish Correspondence*, *Elizabeth*, vol. xxix. Nos. 68 and 74. In the later of these two letters, John Thomas, Sir Henry Sidney's treasurer, wrote from Dublin on the 24th of October, 1569, to Sir William Cecil, as follows:—"I have delivered unto my Lord Deputy, after my arrival here, the articles agreed upon between my Lord of Leicester and your Honour, who doth very well like every of them, and is ready to perform it in such sort as by yourself shall be thought meet. I moved him also touching the marriage-money, to know whether he would receive it himself, or else bestow the same upon your two children, for so I promised your Honour I would do. He is very well contented the money shall be employed to their commodity, and that he will receive no part of it himself, which he promised me he would affirm in his next letters written unto your Honour, and also declare in the same in what sort part of it should be bestowed."

Sir Henry Sidney, especially, was overwhelmed with work. On returning to his duty as Lord Deputy, he had found Ireland full of incipient rebellion. His generous plans for bettering the state of the people had not pleased the haughty and selfish nobles who made money by their constant oppressions and lust-begotten cruelties, which he described as "too loathsome to be written or read." When he called upon these men for submission, some refused and others gave it grudgingly. When he passed a law by which the iniquitous customs were to be abolished, they openly refused obedience thereto, and promptly having laid plans for a revolt, Sir Edmund Butler, brother to the Duke of Ormond, put himself at their head. It is no part of my duty to detail this contest. Enough to say that Sir Henry Sidney entered manfully into the struggle, and brought it to a successful end. But by these cares and labours his already weak health was still more shattered, and he found even more to contend with in the parsimonious spirit and the negligence of the Court than in breaking up a rebel army. At the end of a long letter to Cecil, dated the 24th of February, 1570, he referred to this, as well as to matters more immediately here concerning us. "I feel daily increase of decay in health, and yet not half fast enough. For if I were stark blind, or stark lame, with quietness of mind I should hold myself excused in not doing that which now without thank I do. But, oh, my lord, why ransack I these tender wounds, especially in your presence, since, by good proof, I find that you be consentible and compatible with me? Well, I will no

more of this now, for I fear I have done too much, yet somewhat I confess I am eased by opening this my grief.

"Now," he proceeded, "for our particulars, for our children. I am sorry that you find coldness anywhere in proceeding, when such good liking appeared in the beginning. But, for my part, I never was more ready to perfect that matter than presently I am; assuring you for my part, that, if I might have the greatest prince's daughter in Christendom for him, the match spoken of between us, on my part, should not be broken. Articles, I confess, I received, signed, as I remember, by my lord Leicester and you, and well allowed by me. But where they be, God knoweth; for Waterhouse is weaned from me, and John Thomas is sick.* The paper I cannot find, but this, for troth, Sir, I was never more joyous of the match than I am; but how and which way, never confer with me, while I am here, without special direction. For I neither can care nor consider, while I here dwell, for wife, child, or myself. . . . . I pray you commend me most heartily to my lady, and to our daughter Anne."†

"*Our* daughter Anne," wrote Sir Henry Sidney; but, if he meant anything more than playful banter, he was sadly in error. Later than this letter I can find no other reference to the matter. For some unknown reason, the coldness deprecated by the Lord Deputy was to increase and be permanent. It would have

* Waterhouse was Sir Henry Sidney's secretary, and Thomas his treasurer.

† *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. pp. 43, 44.

been well if Philip could have married this most loveable woman, and could have received from her all wifely incitement to live as the hero of his day, with manly purity. It would have been far better for Anne, could she have been mated before God to a husband worthy of her soul, strong to support her gentle life, and fill it brimful of the happiness from which he could himself have drunk perennial draughts. But Mammon ordained otherwise. In December, 1571, she was married to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, who was a ward of her father's, rich enough to satisfy paternal prudence. He was well nigh the gayest and well nigh the most brutal of Queen Elizabeth's courtiers. Treason in politics often estranged him from his sovereign, and treason in morals often estranged him from his wife; but his fair outside got him as often as there was need for it, in either case, a woman's pardon. When he was young he killed his cook. When he was old, and had squandered his immense patrimony, he persuaded Thomas Churchyard to be surety for his lodgings, and then ran away, leaving the poor poet to hide himself until he could scrape together money enough for payment of the bill.* In a later page we shall see him playing the coward, perhaps even trying to play the murderer, against Sir Philip Sidney.

To say that the breaking off of his early love affair brought sickness upon Philip would be over-fanciful. Certain it is, however, that he was ill just at the time when the negociations for the marriage were

* Cooper, *Athenæ Cantabrigienses* (1861), vol. ii. pp. 389—392.

terminated. On the 3rd of March, 1570, the Earl of Leicester wrote to Doctor Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, to ask that leave might be given to his boy Philip Sidney, who was somewhat subject to sickness, to eat flesh during that Lent.* It was an uncommon request, and one which in those transition-days from Romanism to Protestantism would have been neither made nor acceded to without good reason.

At this time also we get a pleasant insight into Philip's mind, through a letter written by him to Sir William Cecil, on the 27th of February. It was about Doctor Thornton, his sometime tutor, to whom had been promised, upon reversion, the canonry of Christ Church. The promise of the place had been procured from Cecil and Leicester, wrote Philip, "by the request of my friends and his desert towards me, assisted by the worthiness of his life and learning." But so soon as the vacancy occurred it was seen that Mr. Toby Matthew's† friends were using in his behalf "some earnest suit, unworthy their callings, by which it should seem that they sought rather by spite to prevent the one, than honestly to prefer the other." Therefore Philip wrote earnestly entreating that the Secretary's word might be kept, that his own strong wish might be complied with, and that his tutor might receive his due.‡

It is likely that the appeal met with favour.

* MS. in Bennet College, Cambridge, quoted, with misreading of the year, by Zouch, p. 28.

† Father of the Toby Matthew of the reigns of James the First and Charles the First.

‡ Zouch, p. 377.

Philip, at any rate, appears to have had a fresh tutor in Doctor Cooper, a staunch persecuting Protestant.* He was member of a commission, which, sitting in October of this year, 1570, ejected one John Neale, because he refused to attend the celebration of public worship according to the reformed ritual.† In these years there was much other stir on account of the Papists, whom it was thought a duty to rout out wherever they might be found.

During the three years or more of Sidney's sojourn in Oxford, he enjoyed the society of several men whose names were afterwards to become famous. Chief of these were Fulke Greville and Edward Dyer, his firm friends throughout life. Greville, born in the same year with Sidney, 1554, was connected with him by a remote cousinship. He belonged to an ancient family residing at Walcot in Warwickshire. He was educated at Shrewsbury School, in Philip's company. He subsequently came to Oxford, and was entered as a student either of Christ Church or of Broadgates, now Pembroke ; but he was soon after transferred to Trinity College, Cambridge, where most of his college education was received, and of which place he was afterwards a large benefactor.‡ Dyer was also of noble family. He came from Somersetshire, and was most likely a student of Baliol.§

* Zouch, p. 28.

† Wood, *Annals*, p. 169. Cooper was made Bishop of Lincoln at the close of the same year.—Wood, *Fasti Oxonienses*, col. 884.

‡ Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. i. col. 429.

§ Ibid., vol. i. col. 749.

Richard Carew, of Antony, three years older than Sidney, was one of his associates. He was a gentleman commoner of Christ Church, and once, when Philip's uncles, the Earls of Warwick and Leicester, were lodging in Oxford, the young men engaged in a public disputation.* The issue is not on record. Carew says he was chosen for this contest "from a wrongly conceived opinion touching his sufficiency." He was a man, however, of rare parts. His diligence took him beyond the common circle of studies. He lived to publish a translation of part of Tasso, seven years before Fairfax's better known work, and to hold honourable rank in his native Cornwall.†

It would be very easy to string together many other names of Sidney's companions. There was another Carew, named Peter, a distant cousin to Richard, who

* Zouch, p. 33.

† To Mr. Maclean I am indebted for a copy, communicated to him by the present proprietor of Antony, of the curious inscription on Carew's tomb. Appended to it is this :—"The verses following were written by Richard Carew, of Antony, Esquire, immediately before his death (which happened the 6th Nov. 1620), as he was at prayers in his study (his daily practice) at Fower, in the afternoon, and being found in his pocket, were preserved by his grandsonne, Sir Alexander Carew, and according to whose desire they are here set up in memory of him.

"Full thirteen fives of years I toiling have o'erpast,
And in the fourteenth, weary, entered am at last;
While rocks, sands, storms, and leaks, to take my bark away,
By grief, troubles, sorrows, sickness, did assay :
And yet arrived I am not at the port of death,
The port to everlasting life that openeth.
My time, uncertain, Lord, long certain cannot be,
What's best to me's unknown, and only known to Thee.
O, by repentance and amendment, grant that I
May still live in Thy fear, and in Thy favour dye."

fell fighting in Ireland at the age of about twenty-five. He it was who delivered a pretty speech to Queen Elizabeth on the occasion of her visiting Oxford, and won her special commendation. Another friend was Richard Hakluyt, great as a voyager, but greater as the historian of other men's voyages, who was born in London in 1553, studied at Westminster School, and went thence to Christ Church. The same college could also boast the presence of William Camden, the antiquarian, two years older than Hakluyt, and, like him, a Londoner, who had schooling at Christ's Hospital and Saint Paul's. Both these men, and many others, his inferiors in social influence, looked up to Sidney as to a patron, and received from him encouragement which was continued in after life.

It is noteworthy that Sidney, apt and diligent scholar though he was, took no degree. I imagine that the reason of this was his sudden removal from Oxford. During the early months of the year 1571, a terrible plague broke out in that city. The inhabitants died in great numbers, and to reside in the place seemed to be courting destruction. All ordinary and scholastic exercises were by order intermitted, and students were allowed to read in country houses under proper tutors, as though they were within the university walls. It is necessary to suppose that Sidney, as well as many others, was driven from Oxford by this plague. It is just possible that he found a brief refuge in Cambridge.* Thither

* Zouch states as a fact, without giving any authority, that Sidney went from Oxford to Cambridge. I do not think this was the case ;

his friend Fulke Greville either went at that time or had gone before. It would be very interesting to know that Philip accompanied him. If so, he must then have made the acquaintance of some friends, with whom he was afterwards intimate. Chief of these was Gabriel Harvey, a dry hard student, full of caustic wit, but not lacking, when the humour took him, grace and tenderness. He hurled fierce, stinging words in profusion at any one with whom he chanced to be offended, but to all who pleased him he was a warm and helpful friend. His genius was wasted in his efforts to naturalize the hexameter and other classical metres in English, and of this idle attempt he claimed to be the originator. Intimate with him were Thomas Preston, author of *Cambises*, "a lamentable tragedy mixed full of pleasant mirth," as he described it; and John Still, who probably wrote the curious old comedy of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. And with these elderly men was a young one, Edmund Spenser, destined to hold an immeasureably higher place in literature. A year or so older than Sidney, he was already of private note as a poet, for there is small doubt, that he contributed sonnets and epigrams to the *Theatre of Voluptuous Worldings*, published in 1569.

I should like to believe that Sidney went to Cambridge, and formed thus early in life a friendship with such men. Their talk would be much about literature, of a new epoch in which they were in part the founders. If his studies had till now been chiefly limited to classical

but as the statement has been commonly followed, and as I cannot disprove it, I have made reference to it in the text.

lore and to history and philosophy, for which Oxford was especially famous, he would have found pleasant relaxation in discussing Chaucer and Dante and Petrarch, and in following the progress of written thought from its English beginning down to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, published in 1559, and the *Palace of Pleasure*, which appeared about eight years later.

But it is much more likely that Philip spent these vacant months in the company of his parents, who had just returned from Ireland. Sir Henry Sidney, as we have seen, had been at his post as Lord Deputy since the autumn of 1568. He had done all that it was possible to do towards quelling the insurrectionary spirit of the Irish, and this despite the niggardly way in which his sovereign aided his measures. On the 4th of May, 1570, he had written from Dublin to Her Majesty's Privy Council, begging that he might be recalled unless he could be duly supported in his work. In the same letter he requested that his wife might be sent over to him.* Probably his ill-health made her companionship specially needful. For some reason, at any rate, there was urgency in the case. On the 28th of the same month he wrote a pressing letter to Edward Waterhouse, his agent in London, requesting him to hasten the arrival of Lady Sidney, and himself to come after her.† And there is a letter of her own, directed to Cecil, and dated the 1st of June, earnestly entreating him to speak once more in her suit.‡ The whole

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence*, *Elizabeth*, vol. xxx. No. 50.

† Ibid., vol. xxx. No. 55. ‡ Ibid., vol. xxx. No. 53.

family, with the exception of Philip, appears to have promptly proceeded to Ireland, and to have stayed there some seven months. On the 18th of February, 1571, the children sailed for England, and on the 25th of the ensuing month the Lord Deputy himself followed them.* The same causes that had brought him home in 1567, now led him to procure a leave of absence, which issued in abrogation of his office. The Earl of Ormond used all the energy and eloquence of a wicked man towards prejudicing the Queen and Court against Sir Henry. On this occasion he had special reason for his malice, since the chief of the rebels, against whom the Deputy had been warring, was his own brother, Sir Edmund Butler. Him Sir Henry Sidney had hunted zealously from place to place, till at last he was captured and sent to Dublin Castle.† Ormond managed to twist the accounts of the Lord Deputy's brave and vigorous proceedings against the rebels into the appearance of unjust and impolitic dealings, so that when he came back to Court he was received very coldly by the Queen. His brother-in-law, Sir William FitzWilliam, who sided with Ormond,

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence*, vol. xxxi. No. 28, and vol. xxxii. No. 2.

† There had seemed likelihood of one brother being presently lodged in the Tower as a traitor, while the other was being petted at Whitehall as a courtier. But Butler had managed to escape from the Castle, by means of a cord, which was broken by his weight, so that he had tumbled down and got many bruises by the fall, besides slipping into a shallow river, where, through a long dark winter's night he had to wait, up to his chin in the water, for an opportunity of finally running away.—Ibid., *Domestic Correspondence*, vol. clix. No. 1.

was appointed Lord Deputy in his stead, and he was left to perform the less stirring duties of Lord President of Wales.

But Queen Elizabeth seems to have felt that she was not treating Sir Henry Sidney as his great ability and greater honesty deserved. She could not bring herself to abandon her favour towards the brilliant representative of the Irish faction, and so, at the same time both confess herself in the wrong and lose the pleasant company of one of her most splendid flatterers. But she was desirous to show kindness to his rival, and she showed it in a way thoroughly characteristic. A year before she had ennobled Sir William Cecil with the title of Baron Burghley, and now she proposed to confer a similar honour on Sir Henry Sidney. But Cecil was rich, and had the talent for acquiring wealth; whereas Sidney was poor, and not given to money-making. It is a fact redounding much to his honour that though holding vice-regal power in Ireland for so many years, he never followed examples that were plentiful in his age, by receiving from the native chieftains presents which were virtually bribes. Other men found Ireland a mine of wealth; he tells us that he returned from each holding of the Lord Deputy's office three thousand pounds poorer than when he went.* He was rich only in self-respect, and in the honour of all whose praise was a reward.

This, however, was not the only wealth needful to the dignified possession of a peerage. Therefore, the

* State Paper Office, *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1.

Sidneys were sorely perplexed by the Queen's intended favour. On the 2nd of May, 1572, Lady Mary wrote to Lord Burghley a letter which, as giving one of the few insights possible to us into that noble lady's character, deserves to be quoted almost in full :—

"My very good Lord,

"As I may be abashed thus often to trouble you with my bold writing, even so, most honourable, the greatness of my present occasion doth enforce me humbly to crave your noble assistance concerning her Majesty's pleasure for my lord, my husband : who truly, my Lord, I do find greatly dismayed with his hard choice, which is presently offered him, as either to be a baron, now called in the number of many far more able than himself to maintain it withal, or else, in refusing it, to incur her Highness's displeasure. In which hard distress, as we may well term it, considering our ill ability to maintain a higher title than now we possess, since titles of greater calling cannot be well wielded but with some amendment at the Prince's hand, of a ruinated state, or else to his discredit greatly that must take them upon him, these are most humbly to beseech your good noble lordship, even as humbly and earnestly as a poor perplexed woman, to see her husband thus hardly dealt withal, as in this case I know your lordship is both by himself and other his friends made privy unto. And therefore I will omit further troubling your lordship to make any new relation thereof, but only that your lordship, with my foresaid humble request, will stand so much his good lord ; and since no better grace will be obtained to enable us better to higher title, yet, that the motion be no further offered unto him. For, *certes*, right noble and justly renowned, most virtuous lord, if it were known unto you the strife and war between his loyal and dutiful mind to obey her Majesty's pleasure in such matter her Highness can fancy to lay upon him, and his own judgment and wants otherwise to hold the credit and countenance the same shall require, I know your honourable mind, in this specially, must needs look back unto his unfortunate state. Wherein, since we hear credibly your lordship cannot do us that good which most nobly you seek to do us, and that I hope your lordship doth conceive is not altogether undeserved of Mr. Sidney, to leave further to trouble your lordship with my rude complaint and scribbling, I thus once again humbly conclude ; it may please you of your great goodness only to

stay the motion of this new title to be any further offered him, and surely we shall think ourselves most bound unto you, and so, as for many other great occasions at your lordship's hands obtained only, we shall rest ever unfeignedly to pray for your lordship's ever increase and continuance in all honour, long and healthful life, to God's pleasure and your own noble contentation. From my chamber in Court, this second of May. Your lordship's most bounden and assured, to my womanish little power, "M. SIDNEY."*

This letter, very eloquent notwithstanding its bad grammar, seems to have been successful. We hear no more of the intended peerage which, though perhaps kindly thought of by the Queen, could have been only a mockery without an accompanying grant of property. And of substantial gifts Elizabeth had none to offer to such honest servants as Sir Henry Sidney or his son Philip. There were no more at her disposal than were needed for the satisfaction of mere courtiers, like Robert, Earl of Leicester, and Robert, Earl of Essex.

Yet hardly to any family in England was the royal favour more due than to the Sidneys. At this time, the beginning of the year 1572, Sir Henry was forty-three years old, but hard work in the service of the State and a wearing malady had made him almost an old man. It was his lot, ever since Elizabeth had been Queen, to receive much buffeting, and many hard blows both of word and of sword, but little else. When there were rebellions to be quelled he was sent to quell them, and he always succeeded; "but of reward," he declared, with reasonable bitterness, "I can say no more but as he did who said *Foris triumpho et domo ploro.*"†

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. lxxxvi. No. 33. † Ibid., vol. clix. No. 1.

His wife, also, who seems to have been his junior by a year or two, had her own cause of grief. She had been beautiful in her day; she was very beautiful now to all who had the skill to see beauty in a rich, unselfish, altogether womanly mind, although it beamed from cheeks which were scarred and marred, and glistened out of eyes which disease had dulled. "When I went to Newhaven," wrote Sir Henry Sidney, that is, in the autumn of 1562, "I left her a full fair lady, in mine eye at least the fairest, and when I returned I found her as foul a lady as the smallpox could make her; which she did take by continual attendance of her Majesty's most precious person, sick of the same disease, the scars of which, to her resolute discomfort ever since, hath done and doth remain in her face, so as she liketh solitariness *sicut nicticoraæ in domicilio suo.*"* "She chose rather," said her son's biographer and friend, "to hide herself from the curious eyes of a delicate time, than come upon the stage of the world with any manner of disparagement; this mischance of sickness having cast such a veil over her excellent beauty as the modesty of that sex doth many times upon their native and heroical spirits."† One would have thought that since this heavy affliction came from her loving and unselfish attendance upon Queen Elizabeth, her Majesty would have done something towards lessening the troubles of her life. But Queen Elizabeth was not apt at showing gratitude for kindnesses done to her. Therefore, Sir Henry and Lady Mary Sidney

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1, fo. 37. † Fulke Greville, *Life*.

were left to get on as best they could in a poverty which sprang, not from their own reckless living, but from Sir Henry's obligation to spend in the performance of his official duties a great deal more money than came to him as remuneration from the Crown. But, for all that, it is likely that their home was, on the whole, an unusually happy one.

Prior to this winter time of 1571 and 1572, Philip had not seen his father for at least two years and a half, nor his mother for about a year. I imagine that, when forced to quit Oxford, he was glad enough to rejoin them at Ludlow. There, perhaps, he spent some months, it may be even a whole year.* After a course of hard study this would be a pleasant and not at all an unprofitable relaxation. There were the sacred influences of a true home to be enjoyed, the more keenly for recent separation, in the family gathering at Ludlow or at Penshurst.

* Among the local records extant in Shrewsbury there is one from which I infer that at about this period Sidney visited the scene of his early schooling. It includes these items :—

"Spente upon my Lorde Presydent at his first comynge to this towne about the werres, £3 18*s.* 7*d.*

"Spente and geven to Mr. Phillipe Siddney at his comynge to this towne with my Lorde Presydent his father, in wine and cakes and other things, 7*s.* 2*d.*"—Owen and Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury*, vol. i. p. 360.

The date of the entry is 1574, and the natural inference would be that the charge was then incurred ; but as Sidney was in Italy and Germany during the whole of that year, we must suppose that the expenditure, now brought to account, took place two years or more previously. There is no other period in Sidney's life to which it can be assigned. The wars which Sir Henry came about were doubtless the rebellions in Ireland, which he had just returned from quelling.

Of the children four, besides Philip, were at this time living. Mary, the eldest girl,—whom the world was afterwards to know and honour as the gifted Countess of Pembroke,—was a sparkling damsel of about sixteen. Between her and her sister Ambrozia, who could not be more than eleven or twelve, there had been two daughters born. One, named Margaret, had ended a little life of about twenty months' duration, at Penshurst, in 1558; the other had died in infancy. Of the sons, Robert—afterwards to succeed his uncle, Robert Dudley, in the earldom of Leicester—had been baptized at Penshurst, on the 28th of November, 1563, so that he was doubtless in his tenth year at this period of our history. Another boy, Thomas, had been born soon after,* but his existence and his name are nearly all that we know of him.

Philip himself was now in his eighteenth year. His early biographers tell us that he was possessed of every kind of knowledge. At any rate, he had acquired his full share of book lore. But in the profession for which he was designed something beyond that was needful. From works on history, politics, and philosophy he had studied the theory of government, and the character of various peoples: he must now learn through experience, must enlarge or correct his present knowledge by actual observation. Therefore it was determined that he should travel in foreign lands; and we have next to follow him through the three years which gave him, perhaps, the best part of his education.

* Collins, *Introduction*, pp. 97, 114, &c.

CHAPTER III.

FOREIGN SCHOOLING.

1572—1575.

Of public events there were many to which young Sidney's mind must have been directed during the the early part of 1572. Scottish and Irish affairs were passing almost every day into a new entanglement, ever more complicated and disastrous than the last. The most momentous event of the new season, and one discussed in every city, town, and hamlet throughout England and Scotland, was the execution of the Duke of Norfolk, on the eighth of May. Four years of treason, whereby he had sought to release the Queen of Scots and make himself her husband, before deposing Queen Elizabeth by Popish aid, came on that day to their just end.

Men talked much also of the projected marriage of the Queen. In all the thirteen years of her reign the constant petition of her subjects had been, that she would by marrying secure the reasonable hope of a peaceful succession to the throne; and now, at the age of thirty-eight, it seemed to be her whim to marry a lad of half her age. The proposed husband was the Duke of Alençon, younger brother to Charles the Ninth of

France. The overtures were made in the autumn of 1571, Mr. Francis Walsingham, Ambassador at Paris, writing home repeatedly to urge the match and to tell of the favour with which it was regarded by the Queen-mother and the French Court. In the spring, therefore, Elizabeth resolved to send over the Earl of Lincoln, Lord High Admiral of the Sea, as Ambassador Extraordinary, to treat further on the matter and bring back an accurate report of the state of the case.

I do not know what Sidney was doing at this time, but it is not improbable that he was at Court waiting upon his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, taking no little interest in what he saw and heard in the Queen's antechambers, and on the whole finding intense pleasure in his first taste of the sugared outside of courtier life. But wherever he was, the Earl of Lincoln's mission gave him an opportunity of seeing life abroad, too favourable to be lost. Leicester, therefore, having used his influence with the Queen, she granted licence—such are the terms of the document—to her trusty and well-beloved Philip Sidney, Esquire, to go out of England into parts beyond the seas, with three servants, four horses, and all other requisites, and to remain the space of two years immediately following his departure out of the realm, for his attaining the knowledge of foreign languages.*

The passport was issued on the twenty-fifth of May, 1572. Next day the brilliant company quitted London,† and they made quick passage to Paris. Sidney

* Collins, *Introduction*, p. 98, "ex Origine apud Penshurst."

† Stow, *Chronicle*, p. 672.

had particular introduction to the resident Ambassador. "I have thought good," wrote Leicester to Walsingham, "to commend him by these my friendly lines unto you, as unto one I am well assured will have a special care of him during his abode there. He is young and raw, and no doubt shall find those countries, and the demeanours of the people somewhat strange unto him; in which respect your good advice and counsel shall greatly behove him for his better directions, which I do most heartily pray you to vouchsafe him, with any other friendly assistance you shall think needful for him." *

Philip was to find the demeanours of the people somewhat more than strange, and before long he would need the utmost help that Walsingham could give him. But there was no sign of danger then. There was nothing but splendid show and festivity and paying of compliments. The Earl of Lincoln, after pleasant discourse with the Queen-mother Catherine, promptly returned to tell Elizabeth that he saw no objection to the match, that it was liked by the French Court, and that the two arguments against it were very trivial; Alençon's youth need not be any hindrance, for he was growing older every day; and as for the scars which smallpox had left upon his face, they were of no consequence, for he would soon have a beard to hide them.

Sidney did not go back with Lincoln. He remained in Paris for three months or more, seeing all that was to be seen, and winning firm friends. The first of his

* *Cotton. MSS.* in British Museum, *Vespasian*, F. vi. 83.

new friends was the resident Ambassador. Walsingham's age was now about six-and-thirty. Educated at Cambridge, religious troubles had kept him on the Continent through the whole of Queen Mary's reign, and he had used the time well in studying the languages and institutions of the various States of Western Europe. On Elizabeth's accession, he had returned to England, had at once obtained a seat in Parliament, and in the year 1568 had entered the service of the Crown. After other employment, he had been sent to Paris in February, 1571, where he was now holding office. In Sidney he at once felt a strong interest, and between them an intimacy sprang up which was afterwards to issue in close family alliance. His courtly yet unostentatious bearing, his extensive learning, and his sound practical wisdom, must have made his society very agreeable to the young traveller, who would find him the best possible informant respecting the places he desired to visit.

More welcome still to Sidney would be the introduction given him through the Ambassador to the Court gaieties. In Paris there was one blaze of enjoyment. The old strife between Catholics and Huguenots seemed to have ceased, and everywhere there was peace-making. As a lasting knot of friendship, Charles had offered to give his sister Margaret in marriage to Henry of Navarre, and the young King had come to claim his bride. With him were all the Huguenot leaders; the venerable Admiral Coligni, acknowledged head of the party; his son-in-law, Teligny; the Prince of Condé, only a year older than Sidney; Count Lewis of

Nassau, of hardly greater age ; La Rochefoucauld and Du Plessis Mornay, and a score of other men, holding foremost rank among the Protestants for their wit, and grace, and bravery. With many of them Sidney must have been acquainted. We know that Henry of Navarre accepted him as a friend, and treated him as an honoured equal.*

To the ordinary society of the Court, also, he had ready access. The wily, wicked Catherine de' Medici must have patronized and done her best to fascinate him. The King, doubtless remembering that eleven years previously he had been elected by proxy a Knight of the Garter, at the same time as Sir Henry Sidney, did all possible honour to Sir Henry's son. He issued a document to the intent that, considering how great the house of Sidney was in England, how it had ever held place very near to the English sovereign, and desiring well and favourably to treat the young Philip Sidney, Esquire, on account of the good and commendable knowledge which was in him, he purposed to retain him as Gentleman in Ordinary of his Bedchamber.† Appreciating the singular compliment, the young visitor took the prescribed oaths, and entered upon his office on the ninth of August.

This is but one instance more of the consummate treachery with which, under cover of pretended Christian duty and sacred obligation, the wicked King and his more wicked mother, were about to perpetrate the most devilish crime that ever came of human counsel.

* Fulke Greville, p. 36.

† Collins, *Introduction*, p. 98.

The young eye of Sidney was dazzled with the glitter and show of distinguished friendship, and Walsingham's experience was not less at fault. The Huguenots even, though trained to watch for guile, could detect none here.

Therefore there were jousts and dances, feasts and triumphal shows. All shared in the common rejoicing. Men who before had met each other in stern battle, now broke lances together for sport. Men who had cursed each other for apostates and idolators now joined hands and thanked Heaven that there was once more peace in the land.

The eighteenth of August was the great day of pacification. On it two grand processions entered the Church of Our Lady. The one included Charles and Catherine, all the Royal Princes and all the great officers of the Crown, who brought with them the Princess Margaret, pale and haggard, decked in bridal apparel. The other was led by her intended husband, the young King of Navarre, with whom were the Admiral and La Rochefoucauld, and other Huguenots. Joint Catholic and Protestant rites were performed, and in their course one circumstance must have arrested Sidney's notice and seemed to him strange indeed. When Margaret was asked whether she would take Henry for her husband, she made neither answer nor bow; so Charles had to place his hand on the back of her head and push it forwards, in forced token of assent, she declaring, as presently she did, that she could not assent, as she was solemnly pledged to the Duke of Guise, Navarre's sworn foe.

This, however, was a very ineffective protest. The marriage had been performed, and Henry might take away his bride, as soon as the festivities were over. It is true, the Duke of Guise came with armed men into Paris, and by his evil presence threw a gloom over the gaiety. But what could be done? The King went to Coligni, said that he could not send away his kinsman, yet he feared there might be some small disturbance ;— did not the Admiral think it would be better to bring into the city a few more regiments of soldiers? The Admiral saw no harm, and the Protestants believed that care was being taken for their safety.

Coligni was wounded by the shot of an assassin. It was a bad omen. But let the culprit be sought and punished ; and let Heaven be praised that this deed was not deadly in its issue. And the pleasant sports went on for three days more.

The twenty-third of August was Saturday, and next day would be the festival of Saint Bartholomew. The city seemed asleep when, at an hour and a half after midnight, the Palace clock gave an unwonted sound. In an instant lights were placed at every window. Soldiers emerged from hitherto dark corners, and thousands of men, armed and muffled, with the mark of the cross fastened to their sleeves, streamed out of the houses and joined in the cry, "For God and for the King!" Then all was confusion ; half-naked men and women rushing out to be slaughtered ; a strange mingling of prayers and curses, of laughter and wailing. In most parts there was indiscriminate butchery of all Huguenots. Here and there were little parties of mur-

derers who did their work in orderly manner. One such party was headed by the Duke of Guise. He hastened to the house of Coligni, and sent one of his men to force an entrance. The fellow made his way to the wounded Admiral's couch and stabbed him. "Is it done?" shouted the Duke from below. "Yes," it was answered. "Let us see the body," returned the leader. So the quivering body was thrown out of window. The Duke looked closely at the face, and when he knew that it belonged to his old enemy, he raised his foot many times and kicked the corpse in the belly. Then he hurried off, exclaiming merrily, "Come, comrades; on with your work! God and the King command it!"

There were many more such scenes. Sidney, lodging with Walsingham, was safe; but there were sights sad and horrible enough to swim in his eyes for a lifetime. Had he looked next morning from the Ambassador's house up to the Palace, he might have seen the detestable monarch, who a fortnight before had made him Gentleman of the Bedchamber, standing at his bedroom window, with a broken arquebus in his hand, trying in vain to fire towards the Faubourg Saint Germain, where Protestants mostly congregated, and shouting, "Kill! kill!"

They did kill. According to the lowest estimate five thousand Protestants were murdered in Paris, and about a hundred thousand in the provinces. For seven days the slaughter lasted, and through that time blood flowed in the streets like rain.

This was the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Having seen it, Sidney had seen enough of Paris. But had he

chosen to remain, the fears of his kindred would have withdrawn him. A speedy letter was written, with the sanction of the Privy Council of Elizabeth, and signed by Burghley and Leicester, thanking Walsingham for the protection he had afforded to the young Englishmen resident in Paris, and desiring him to use all expedition in procuring passports for the removal of Sidney and his suite.*

Some time in September the party left France. Walsingham had fears lest Sidney should suffer harm from the evil practices of his attendants,—whatever those might be. He therefore put him under the charge of Dr. Watson, then Dean, and afterwards Bishop, of Winchester.† But the Doctor appears to have soon gone his own way, and left Sidney to travel alone. Of the details of his travel, through nearly a year, we are unfortunately ignorant. All we know is that, during the ensuing months, he proceeded through Lorraine to Strasbourg, and thence past Heidelberg to Frankfort.‡

At Frankfort, he lodged in the house of Andrew Wechel, a printer. In those days printing establishments were the usual resting-places of men of learning on their travels; and Andrew Wechel, conveniently residing in an important and central town, was hardly more renowned for his careful printing of Greek and Hebrew books, than for his generous bearing towards the studious men of all lands.§ At the time of Sidney's

* Sept. 9, 1572; Collins, *Introduction*, p. 99.

† Walsingham to Leicester, Oct. 17; cited by Zouch, pp. 52, 53.

‡ Collins, *Introduction*, p. 100.

§ *Langueti Epistolæ* (ed. 1776), pp. 173, 258, 275, 284.

visit, there was also staying with him Hubert Languet; and between the two visitors a warm and lasting friendship sprang up.

Languet was indeed a man whom Philip might be proud to have for a friend. Born in 1518, he was a native of Viteaux in Burgundy. He had occupied his youth with thoughtful travel and diligent study, and in 1547 he had become Professor of civil law in the University of Padua. But two years later, when on a visit to Wirtemberg, he met with Melancthon and became warmly attached to him. The skilful arguments and fair example of the most genial of all the great Reformers conquered both his heart and his intellect. That he might live near to his new teacher, he resigned his professorship at Padua; and—which was a more important measure—he soon afterwards publicly renounced his connection with the Church of Rome. His great learning and greater shrewdness, soon secured for him the prominent place he now held among Protestants. Through all mazes of European politics his clear observation rarely missed the clue; and of all plots and counterplots in which the friends and foes of his party were mixed up, he made himself master. With almost every leading Protestant he was acquainted, and especially with Philip du Plessis Mornay, a leading man among the Huguenots.* At the time of the

* It is doubtful whether he or Du Plessis, or some one else, was author of the celebrated *Vindiciæ contra Tyrannos*, Auctore Stephano Junio Bruto Celta (1579), in which the doctrine is eloquently laid down that kings who despoil the Church of God, and the inheritance of His saints, who sanction idolatries and blasphemies, and who violate their

Saint Bartholomew Massacre he was hiding in Paris, having gone thither, on behalf of the German Princes, to present an address to the French King.* He was now in Frankfort, serving as the secret Minister of the Elector of Saxony.†

Between him and Sidney there was just that proportion of likeness and unlikeness requisite to a firm friendship. The ripened man of fifty-four found a delightful freshness in a youth of eighteen who was vigorously learning to apply in life the lessons of the schools. The youth was gladly strengthened by the experienced and lettered talk of a man who knew all that was then happening worth note in the Christian world, and could tell more than most men would ever hope to read of bygone times. Thus—writing nine years later, under pastoral image, and speaking of himself as Philisides singing to his sheep—Sir Philip Sidney acknowledged his debt :—

> " The song I sang old Languet had me taught—
> Languet the shepherd best swift Ister knew,
> For clerkly reed, and hating what is naught,
> For faithful heart, clean hands, and mouth as true.
> With his sweet skill my skilless youth he drew
> To have a feeling taste of Him that sits
> Beyond the heaven, far more beyond our wits.
>
> " He said the music best those powers pleased
> Was jump accord between our wit and will,
> Where highest notes to godliness are raised,

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people's liberties, may, and ought to, be deposed by the constitutional action of their subjects, though not by the private hand of the assassin: a famous book among Englishmen of Cromwell's day.

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 19.

† Fulke Greville, p. 8.

And lowest sink not down to jot of ill.
With old true tales he wont mine ears to fill,
How shepherds did of yore, how now they thrive,
Spoiling their flock, or while 'twixt them they strive." *

In the enjoyment of Languet's friendship, Sidney appears to have spent some time at Frankfort;† and when the minister's business took him early in the summer of 1573 to Vienna, he went thither with him.‡ Languet showed him all that was to be seen at the Court of the Emperor Maximilian the Second, introduced him to many of his friends, and, as we may well imagine, gave him all necessary good advice. Sidney's route is not everywhere clearly traceable; but he seems, at this time, not to have remained long in Vienna. He wished to visit other regions. In August or September, he left Languet, intending to make only a three days' journey to Presburg;

* *Arcadia*, (10th ed. 1755), Book iii. pp. 397, 398.

† He was in Frankfort on the 20th of May, 1573, as appears from a bill of exchange which he drew, on that day, upon "Mr. William Blount, Master of the Counter in Wood Street." The document runs thus:—"On the last day of May, next coming, I pray you to pay by this, my first bill of exchange, my second not being paid before, unto Reynold Dreling, or the bringer hereof, one hundred and twenty pounds, sterling money current, for merchandize; and is for the value here in Frankfort by me received of Christian Rolgin for mine own use. At the day fail not, but make good payment. And so God help you. Your loving friend, Philip Sidney."—Zouch, p. 82.

‡ Fulke Greville says, carelessly, that Languet threw aside his work and spent the whole three years of Sidney's stay on the continent in acting as his tutor and companion. This, however, is clearly a mistake. During a large part of one year there was no acquaintance between them, and during another they corresponded, the one being at Vienna, the other in Italy.

but once on the move, he stayed away for several weeks, visiting other parts of Hungary.* Languet, in a pleasant letter, complained that he had cheated him by this unexpected absence. "Like a bird which has broken the wires of its cage, you make merry, unmindful perhaps of your friends, and heedless of the host of dangers which are incident to such a mode of travelling. I praise your desire of seeing the cities and the customs of many nations, for in that way we train our judgment, and thereby we gain a proper love for our own quiet life; but I am sorry that you have no one with you who might discourse to you in the course of your journey, or instruct you about the manners and institutions of the people whom you visit, introduce you to learned men, and, if need be, serve as your interpreter. I could have procured you such a companion, if you had told me what you were going to do."† Perhaps Philip was best alone. He could well spare to miss some knowledge for lack of a tutor, in consideration of the greater worth to him of experience for which he had gone out to make his independent bargain.

He appears to have returned to Vienna in October, where he spent about another month with Languet, and whence he then started on a longer journey. He must go to Italy, the land richest of all in glorious associations, ancient and modern. Languet was loth to part with him, gave him much advice and exacted from him many promises; ‡—but he could not hinder him from doing what so manifestly was to his advantage. There-

* *Langueti Epistolæ* (ed. Hailes, 1776), p. 1.
† Ibid., pp. 1, 2. ‡ Ibid., pp. 7, 99.

fore, early in November, in company with his attendants, he set off on horseback for Venice.* Tears were shed at parting,† and a brisk correspondence was determined upon in the interests of friendship. Languet and Sidney would write to each other—of course in Latin—once every week,‡ and Languet steadily kept to the arrangement. Sidney does not seem to have written so often; and of the letters which he did write several have been lost sight of or lost. But those portions of the correspondence which are extant are of very great value, and I shall make large quotations from them. At no other period of Sidney's life have we such clear insight into the workings of his mind and the influence upon it of outside events.

They use more freely than is now usual, formal exaggerations in the phrase of friendship. No love-oppressed youth can write with more earnest passion and more fond solicitude, or can be troubled with more frequent fears and more causeless jealousies, than Languet, at this time fifty-five years old, shows in his letters to Sidney, now nineteen. Sidney, on the other hand, is not wanting in maidenlike bashfulness; and often he takes pleasure in teasing his old friend, knowing that the strong bond of love which is between them cannot be weakened by such play.

Languet's first letter opens with a reproach. "From how much care and anxiety, and even dread, would you have saved me, if you had only written once or twice on your journey! I did not want lengthy letters,

* *Correspondence of Sidney and Languet* (ed. Pears, 1845), p. 204.
† *Languetii Epistolæ*, p. 3. ‡ *Correspondence*, p. 203.

but just a few words, as 'We have reached this place safely to-day,' or something like that. Have you forgotten how earnestly I begged for so much when you were going away? But you will say, 'It matters little for you to hear so soon: I shall write when I get to Padua or Venice.' You ought to have done both."* Next week he writes still more complainingly, "I wonder greatly what can cause in you such persevering silence, and I know not why I have deserved such treatment from you. If a whole month passes without my hearing from you, I shall be obliged to think that something very dreadful has happened." †

Thus Sidney replies: "I do not say, 'It matters little for you to hear so soon;' for I know that 'love is full of anxious fear.' The truth is, I could find no one who was going to Vienna. But since you quietly charge me with some loosening of the love which I bear and ever shall bear towards you and your wonderful goodness, I must, while I admit your kind feeling, very seriously beg you always to feel sure that, whatever distance may be between us, I am not so full of childish folly, or of womanish inconstancy, or of brutish ingratitude, as not eagerly to seek your friendship, and not to hold it when I have won it, and not constantly to feel thankful that I have it."‡

But the friendship between the two showed itself in nobler things than mere protestations and assurances of mutual love. Languet's great influence upon him was

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 2. † Ibid., p. 4.
‡ *Correspondence*, p. 203.

apparent in all Sidney's after life. There was exquisite tenderness in the care taken by the old man of his pupil; believing that he had a sacred trust to fulfil, he spared no labour, and cared not what sacrifice he made, if only he could ripen into perfect fruit the fair blossom over which he felt bound to keep watch. Philip gladly accepted the protection, gave good heed to the counsel offered to him, and referred in all his needs and difficulties to the friend who rejoiced to give him help.

On going into Italy, Languet felt that his young friend was running a risk. At that time there was especial danger. Even the hopeful state of Protestantism occasioned great fears on behalf of individual Protestants. "Satan," wrote Languet in the first of the letters just quoted from, "is beginning to gnash his teeth, because he sees that his kingdom is tottering. For neither in France nor in Belgium do things happen to his liking; and we cannot doubt that he will rouse his agents to greater cruelty. Till now this has been their only way of upholding his empire,—and I have no question that if you entrust yourself to their honour, you will be in greater risk than you would have been a few years back. Bear with the love which makes me so often force this upon your thoughts." *

Never to be beyond reach, then, of this good friend's help, Sidney rode out of Vienna. With him were three companions, if not more. One of them was Lewis Bryskitt, who has told us how, at this time,

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 3.

" Through many a hill and dale,
Through pleasant woods, and many an unknown way,
Along the banks of many silver streams
He with him went ; and with him he did scale
The craggy rocks of th' Alps and Appenine ;
Still with the muses sporting, while those beams
Of virtue kindled in his breast,
Which after did so gloriously forth shine." *

Bryskitt afterwards attained some distinction among men of mark. He became clerk to Sir Henry Sidney's Council in Dublin, and held a like trust under Lord Grey of Wilton, the next Irish Deputy. He was a friend of Spenser's and, among his works was a translation of Baptista Giraldi's *Discourse of Civill Life, containing the Ethike Part of Moral Philosophie;* a valuable book to which he was attracted by the study of the philosophical writings of the Italians, for which this tour gave him opportunities.† Another of the party was Griffin Madox, a thorough and very amusing Welshman, but only on that account a more trustworthy attendant upon Sidney, whom he seems to have served to the end of his life.‡ Sidney's third companion, was Thomas Coningsby, a youth of about equal rank with our hero, whose cousin, Philippa Fitz-William, he subsequently married.

Coningsby was a good friend to Sidney as long as he lived ; but there was near chance of their intimacy being broken in the course of the journey to Italy.

* *A Pastorall Aeglogue upon the Death of Sir Philip Sidney, Knight*, ll. 85—92.

† London, 1606, quarto, p. 24 ; Cf. Todd, *Life of Spenser* (ed. of 1861), pp. xxvi, xxvii.

‡ *Correspondence*, p. 209, etc. ; *Sidney Papers*, vol. i, p. 112.

The circumstance, of small value in itself, aptly illustrates Philip's temperament, quick and fiery, and therefore often likely to bring him into mischief. The party put up for a night at some inn on the road, and, as has been no uncommon thing ever since the beginning of inns, were cheated by the inn-keeper. The fellow managed to get his bill paid twice, and Sidney, not knowing the true state of the case, but finding his purse emptier than he thought for, charged Conings by with pilfering the money. It was an awkward blunder to make, and delicate management was needed before proper explanation restored peace. The time had then gone by for getting the money back from the real thief.*

At Venice, and in journeying thence to other parts of Italy, Sidney spent about eight months. He could not have chosen his head-quarters more fitly. Venice, the Queen of the Adriatic, was then at the height of her glory. Older than most of the mediæval cities of Italy, she had quietly worked her own way through centuries, caring little for the political struggles that went on around her. Placed in the way of naval greatness, she had declared her strength in contests with every State which showed any vigour of rivalry. Wealth squandered by other nations in crusades, she had gathered up and stored in her coffers. Fully alive to all changes in foreign politics, whereby her welfare was affected, she had taken only partial interest in the internal affairs of Italy. She had been neither Guelf nor Ghibelin. She had cared nothing for

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 8.

the Florentine disputes which made Dante an exile, nor for the Roman struggles towards liberty under Rienzi. Now, indeed, in Sidney's day, when all other Italian States were sunk in the worst degradation, there were signs of free life in Venice, and forces were silently preparing for one staunch battle in the cause of freedom. But Shakespeare's picture was a true one. The Rialto was the heart of Venice, and Antonios and Shylocks made up the body of her citizens. Hither came men from all parts of the world, chiefly on errands of merchandize ; though, being assembled, they knew how to secure other advantages of intercourse. Men of science and letters found here fellow workmen with whom they could sympathize and from whom they could learn. Arts, newly risen to unrivalled eminence, here had better patrons and more genial critics than were to be known elsewhere. Students of theology received here more kindly regard than could be met with in other parts ; and here they were free, without fear of persecution, to set forth what opinions they liked. Thus Venice was full of turmoil, and in her broad streets and splendid mansions were to be seen representatives of almost every nation in Europe.

Of all this excitement Sidney was no dull spectator. With some of the chief people in the city he made prompt acquaintance. From Vienna he brought letters of introduction to Arnaud du Ferrier, the French Ambassador, and Francis Perrot, a French resident in Italy.* Although not strictly Protestants, both were

* *Correspondence*, p. 203.

zealous champions of religious liberty, and associates with Henry of Navarre. Both also were friends of Peter Sarpi, who thirty-three years later was to fill the world with astonishment at the victorious battle waged by him for Venice against Paul the Fifth and all the priestly pomp of Rome. The son of a poor tradesman, he was now a Servite friar,—the Servites being a branch of the Augustine order. He was a little man, of delicate appearance, fond of study, but shy and silent. He was great in the scholastic disputations of his day, and in all linguistic subtleties, but greater as a master of natural science. In astronomy, optics, hydraulics, anatomy, chemistry, botany, and mineralogy, he was accounted to have rare knowledge. In a vague way he seems to have anticipated our own Harvey in his discovery of the circulation of the blood, and to have preceded his friend and pupil Galileo, in the invention of the thermometer. Liberal beyond his day, he chose his friends without regard to their theology. With Jewish scholiasts and English Protestants he was on intimate terms; and from the strangers who visited Venice he was eager in drawing information as to the customs, laws, religion, and natural productions of foreign countries. I do not know, but it is more than probable, that there was friendship between him and Sidney, who was his junior by a year.

But there are other men of whose intimacy with Philip there is not a doubt. He may not have gained introduction to Titian, at this time an old man; but he was acquainted with Titian's greatest pupils, Tintoretto,

now sixty years old, and Paul Veronese, whose age was forty.* A friend of a different order was Count Philip Lewis of Hannau, a young man about as old as Sidney, but whose zeal and courage had made him already famous throughout Europe.† Sidney made other acquaintances, but it is not necessary to enumerate them. He had access to the society of haughty senators, and sat at the tables of splendid merchants. "Yet I would far rather have one pleasant chat with you, my dear Languet," he wrote, "than enjoy the magnificent magnificencies of all these magnificoes."‡

With Venice, indeed, he was not so well pleased as he had expected to be.§ He thought of staying there only a few weeks, and then of going on to Padua, where there were better opportunities of study.‖ He was detained for a little while by business,¶ but the delay did not keep him from his books. "Just now," he wrote on the 19th of December, "I am learning astronomy, and getting a notion of music. I practice my pen only in writing to you; but I find that practice does anything but make perfect. The more I write, the worse I get to write. Do, pray, send me some rules about composition, and at the same time put in those bits of advice which you said you would keep till you should see me again; for I know that your counsel can never be exhausted, and there are faults enough in me to deserve endless admonitions."

* *Correspondence*, pp. 208, 211.
† *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 6.
‡ *Correspondence*, p. 204.
§ *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 9.
‖ *Correspondence*, p. 204.
¶ *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 27.

And further on ; "If you can pick them up in Vienna, I wish you would send me Plutarch's works translated into French. I would willingly pay five times their value for them." In return he proposed to send to his friend some books which he had had great pleasure in reading. They were Tarchagnota's History of the World ; a collection of Princely Letters ; another, of Letters by Thirteen Illustrious Men, of whom Boccaccio was one ; a Treatise on Mottoes, by Ruscelli, the friend of Tasso ; and two Histories of Venice.* I give the titles of these books since they indicate the course of Sidney's thought. He was making close study of Italian history and literature, with special attention to the antiquities of the town in which he lodged.

Languet could not have cared much for these books, as he took no notice of Philip's offer ; but to other parts of his letter he replied very sensibly on New Year's Day, "You ask me how you ought to form a style of writing. In my opinion you cannot do better than give careful study to all Cicero's letters, not only for the sake of the graceful Latin, but also on account of the weighty truths which they contain. Nowhere is there a better explanation of the way in which the Roman Republic was overthrown. Many are fond of choosing one of his letters and turning it into another language, and then, without the book, of re-translating it into Latin, so as to compare the two versions, and mark the force of Cicero's expressions. But take care of slipping into the heresy of those who

* *Correspondence*, pp. 204, 205.

believe that Ciceronianism is the summum bonum, and who will spend a lifetime in aiming after it." In so saying Languet was enforcing the wise protest of Erasmus against the classical pedantry of the day. He went on to state that, for all the money in the world, he could not buy a copy of Plutarch, though perhaps he might borrow one. "But when you begin to read Cicero's letters, you will hardly need Plutarch. I approve of your giving some study to astronomy; for those who are ignorant of it cannot understand cosmography. And they who read history without knowledge of cosmography seem to me to be just groping in the dark."*

Worthy to be quoted also, for the sake of their reference to Sidney's studies, are some remarks made by Languet three weeks later. "You have done well," he wrote, "in learning the rudiments of astronomy, but I do not advise you to work much more at that science, since it is very difficult, and will be of small value to you. I know not whether you are wise in turning your attention to geometry. It is a fine study, and well deserving of thoughtful application. But you must consider what are your prospects, and how quickly you will have to abandon this literary ease; and consequently you ought to give to those matters which are absolutely needful all the little time you have. I call those things needful of which it is discreditable for a man of high rank in life to be ignorant, which, by and by, will perhaps serve you for ornament and resource. Geometry, it is true,

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 18, 19.

may be of great worth to a general in fortifying and investing towns, in measuring camps, and in every kind of construction; but a great deal of time is needed to acquire enough knowledge of it to be really useful; and I think it very foolish to get a smattering of all sorts of subjects, for show and not for use. Besides, you have too little fun in your nature, and this is a study which will make you still more grave. It requires close application of thought, and thus wears out the lively parts of the mind, and greatly weakens the body; and you know that you have not a morsel too much health. Greek literature, again, is a very beautiful study; but I fear you will have no leisure to follow it through, and whatever time you give to it you steal from Latin, which, though less elegant than Greek, is far better worth your knowing. So I know not what to advise you. I only beg you to learn those things which are most necessary."*

Sidney was now acquainted with four languages, Latin, Italian, French, and his native English. Languet urged him to add German to the number,† but he found it too harsh and unpronounceable to suit his taste.‡ He wished to learn Greek chiefly for the sake of studying Aristotle, whose works, especially the *Politics*, he reckoned of great value. The whole ground of ethical and metaphysical philosophy was very attractive to him. Indeed, he seems to have given thought to every branch of the knowledge common in his day.

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 25, 26. † Ibid., p. 26.
‡ *Correspondence*, p. 208.

His constant application to hard work roused the fears of even hard-working Languet. "I do beg you," he wrote, "to take care of your health, and see that you do not ruin yourself with over-work. A brain too much taxed cannot live long, and a healthy mind is good for nothing unless lodged in a healthy body."* We have just seen him also urging his pupil to choose subjects which would encourage, instead of lessening, a merry disposition. Sidney replied, "I must admit that I am more sober than my age or business require; but I have always found that I am never so little troubled with melancholy as when my weak mind is employed about something particularly difficult."†

This letter was written from Padua, whither Philip had removed on the 14th or 15th of January.‡ He made a stay of about six weeks, using profitably the seclusion which was possible in the quiet university town. While there, Languet wrote to him, begging him to have his portrait painted for him. The fond old man enclosed some complimentary verses, the first effort at rhyme, he said, which he had ever made in his life; and of these he wished a copy to be taken and set under his picture.§ "I am very glad," Sidney wrote back with proper modesty, "that you have asked me so urgently for my likeness, since it tells me what sweet thoughts you have about me, and how much you love me. Of course you should have it, even if there were none of that true and full-grown friendship

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 26.
† *Correspondence*, p. 208.
‡ Ibid., p. 206.
§ *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 27.

between us, which surpasses all the other relations of life, just as the warm bright sun obscures all fainter stars. You might fairly claim far greater things than this, on account of the many kindnesses which I owe to you. So, as soon as I get back to Venice, I will employ either Paul Veronese or Tintoretto, both of whom are prime masters of their art. But about those verses you have written ;—certainly it is a glorious thing to be praised by one who has earned so much praise, and I prize your compliments as fresh proofs of your undying love ; but really I cannot do such a bare-faced thing as to have an advertizement of merits which I do not truly possess, placed at the foot of my portrait. Ask anything else that you like, and you know how gladly I will do it, if it is at all possible, but do not ask this."*

Sidney did not wish to perpetuate such high-flown language as his friend indulged in. In return for it, however, he sent back high encomiums and assurances of his zealous love. "I pray you," he wrote on the 11th of February, "tell me all about your own concerns, as well as any public news that transpires. For in your letters I seem to have a complete picture of this age of ours, an age which is like a bow too long and too much bent, and which will presently break unless it is unstrung. Therefore, my dear Hubert, I want you to write down all the thoughts which you dare put on paper. Your letters are delightful to me for all sorts of reasons, but the chief reason is just this, that they are yours."†

* *Correspondence*, p. 209. † Ibid., p. 210.

Sidney was in Venice again by the 26th of February, among other things sitting for the promised portrait, which was being taken by Paul Veronese.* At about this time he visited Genoa, and in the middle of April he returned to Padua for a month or so more.† The remaining two months of his Italian residence were probably spent wholly in Venice, much to Languet's discontent, who thought that Sidney had had enough, and more than enough, of Venetian spectacles.‡

It was not that the blunt reformer was altogether averse to spectacles. He was extremely anxious that Philip should join with him in witnessing one of unusual splendour. This was on the occasion of Henry, the Duke of Anjou, being installed as King of Poland. Wonderful preparations were made, and Languet urged his friend to be present at it, both for the pomp and glitter he would see, and for the opportunity that he would find in it of forming friendship with great men of various nations.§ But Sidney did not care much for it. He preferred to stay in Italy, carrying on his studies, strengthening his friendship with those men whom he already knew, and especially with the Count of Hannau. His journeys from one part of Italy to another seem to have been in company with the Count, and his chief reason for loitering so long in those regions was that he might enjoy the

* *Correspondence*, p. 211.
† Ibid., pp. 215, 218.
‡ *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 99.
§ Ibid., p. 17, &c.

pleasure and the safety of the same nobleman's society.

On many grounds Languet disliked this long stay. He was anxious to regain the companionship of his pupil—his son—his boy, as he variously called Philip. He was full of fears lest harm should come to him, lest he should have his weak health ruined by the climate, or his life endangered through the hatred of all Catholics to the English, or his moral and religious principles poisoned by the evil influences surrounding him. This was the burden of many of his letters. Sometimes he wrote playfully, and used coaxing language; at other times his words were stern and reproachful. In April, as we have seen, Sidney paid a running visit to Genoa. "If I thought that my counsel had any weight with you," declared Languet, "I should urge you, as I have done over and over again, to keep clear of those places which are under Spanish rule; for the Spaniards, with good reason, hate the English, and Genoa is so bound up with Spain that you cannot possibly be safe there. But I suppose you find pleasure in seeing so many vessels being made ready for war, or else there is sweet music to you in the clank of the chains of the poor galley slaves; or is it that you wait in the hope of seeing this Don John of Austria as he passes back into Spain?"*

Sidney wished naturally to go on to Rome. But of that Languet would not hear. Having exacted a pledge before they parted in Vienna, he now said he

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, pp. 58, 59.

would allow every other promise to be broken if only this one were kept.* The sturdy Huguenot was afraid that the gorgeous ceremonies of the Catholic Church, attractive to his charge, would draw him from the purer and more austere faith. Yet there could hardly have been reason for the fear. Not long before, Sidney had been present at the services of the Church of Our Lady in Paris, and had seen their issue in the Saint Bartholomew massacre; there could not now, therefore, be much allurement for him in the most imposing spectacles at Saint Peter's Cathedral. But Languet had his way, and Sidney never went to Rome.

As the summer advanced Languet found a new reason for Philip's return to Vienna. "I fear that you will suffer harm from the great heat," he said, on the 13th of June, "since you are of such tender constitution; and knowing, as I do, how eagerly, almost intemperately, you eat all sorts of fruit. I warn you of fever and dysentery if you stay there during the summer." † Nor was the warning quite unnecessary, it would seem, for in July Sidney was seriously ill, suffering from severe pains in his head which threatened to issue in pleurisy, and which were thought to be the result of drinking too much water. "This, my darling Sidney, I foresaw and dreaded, and for that reason I begged you not to stay over Midsummer. If you love me, show some care for your health, and on this matter follow your own sense, rather than trust to other people. If any mischance befel you, I should be the most wretched man in the

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 7, 99, &c. † Ibid., p. 72.

world; for there is nothing to give me the least pleasure save our friendship, and the hope I have of your manhood. The ruin of my native land, and the calamities which have lately overtaken all my friends, make life a great deal worse to me than death." *

Languet often wrote in this strain. He was altogether weary of the world, and, though still doing all that he could for society, esteemed his efforts useless. Sidney, he thought, with the prospect of many active years before him, was bound to be hopeful, to be very careful of his life and to use every nerve in fitting himself for manly fight in the cause of liberty, both civil and religious—but what hope was left for himself? For the young man, he said, he was afraid; but for himself he had nothing to dread. "My life is of no good to any one, and death will only rid me of the miseries in which I live. What can be more wretched for a man, who has any feeling of humanity in him, than to study such crimes as have through the last ten or twelve years been committed, as are still being committed, in my ill-fated France and in Belgium?" †

To these complainings Philip returned a very characteristic answer, aptly expressive of his brave yet modest temper. He said, "This last letter of yours has troubled me so! I can hardly collect my thoughts to answer it. Oh, my dear Languet! can it be that you are unhappy, you whom all with a spark of virtue left in them join to love and honour? If any work of mine

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, p 99. † Ibid., p. 50

could help you at all, you know how I should rejoice to do it; for I have nothing which is not more rightly yours than mine." * He went on to show how the state of Europe yet left room for hope. The cause of Protestantism was advancing, and even persecution proving itself useful. In Belgium, troubles enough had seemed to come. The Duke of Alva had slaughtered thousands of innocent subjects, and had taken the lives of such great men as Counts Egmont and Horne: yet a hopeful soul need not despond because of this. "Indeed, I know not how things could have turned out better. It is true that all that fair region is in flames; but remember that, without this the Spaniards cannot be burnt out; and I think it is more desirable that perfidious Hannibal should be driven thus out of Saguntum, than that he should be left to the quiet holding of it." Another trouble was from Turkey, where the Moslems were designing to do much harm to Christianity by the conquest of Italy. What could be better? The Christian body would be rid of a rotten member, whereby the whole system had been infected. The Princes of Christendom would be roused from their deep dull slumbers, and Frenchmen, instead of cutting one another's throats, would join battle against a common foe. "But more than that; I am quite sure that this ruinous Italy would so poison the Turks themselves, would so ensnare them in its vile allurements, that they would soon tumble down without being pushed. Depend upon it, unless I am greatly mistaken, we shall see this in our own times." † Young Sidney was un-

* *Correspondence*, p. 212. † Ibid., p. 213.

doubtedly very much in the wrong, and his prophecy does not betoken more than a youth's wisdom.

The great strife of continental parties was as yet new to him, and he was very far from having mastered its intricacies. His letters contain many very curious and amusing speculations. But they show us the bent of his mind. During the first few months of his Italian sojourn, he had applied himself mostly to book-lore; but now his eyes were opening to the greater interest and truer import of real life. In his own crude, youthful way, he was making observations, treasuring up facts.

And these were months very full of startling incidents. Two great struggles were now impending, on the issue of which seemed to depend the whole future of Europe. In both Spain was a leading combatant. She had assumed the post of champion of Catholic Christianity, and she opposed herself in the one case to the power of the Mahometans, in the other to the Protestant forces.

To withstand the aggressive spirit of the Turks the Holy League had, a few years before this time, been formed between King Philip of Spain, the Pope, and the Venetian Republic. The parties to this treaty had bound themselves to a perpetual and united strife against the Moslems. Don John of Austria, Philip's half-brother, though then only twenty-four years old, had been appointed Captain-General of the combined forces, and he had employed all his great talents in making ready for the conflict. In the autumn of 1571, he had set sail from Messina at the head of a magnifi-

cent fleet; and three weeks afterwards, on the seventh of October, had been fought the battle of Lepanto. It was the greatest of modern sea-fights, and in it the Turks lost five-and-twenty thousand men. The news of the glorious triumph spread upon the winds, and aroused enthusiastic joy throughout all Europe. Pope Pius the Fifth was so overcome with delight that he burst into tears, and could only exclaim, in the words of Scripture, "There was a man sent from God, and his name was John!"

Yet the victory was not great enough seriously to overawe the Turks, or to destroy the fear of timid Christians, that presently all Europe would be enslaved by the hated followers of Mahomet. That was the thought of many in this year of Sidney's residence in Italy. Don John was carrying on the war in Tunis and Morocco, but Venice had withdrawn from the league and inclined to a humiliating concession to her former enemy. Men knew not what would be the end of it all. Many rumours of strange things were abroad, and Sidney was disposed to listen to them. In one letter he told Languet of a report, well authenticated, that there was to be an alliance between Venice and the Turks; according to another, it was made out that Spaniard and Turk would soon be leagued together; and there was a third and still more absurd story of a bond between the Turk and the Queen of England.* The Turkish power, under a show of greatness, was already dying out; but Sidney could not see this; nor could the oldest and the wisest in that day.

* *Correspondence*, p. 205.

There was still greater interest, however, in watching the progress of affairs nearer home. King Philip hated Protestants more than he hated Moslems, and he was now withdrawing himself from battle with the Turks in order that all his strength might be used in crushing the spirit of independence which was rising in the Netherlands. The struggle was not newly begun : it had been growing for some fifteen years, and had already caused the death of thousands upon thousands. Now, however, it was receiving a new impulse. The Spanish forces having been much strengthened, formidable preparations to meet them were being made under the wise guidance of William of Orange and his brother Lewis of Nassau. Sidney may have been personally acquainted with Count Lewis who had been present at the ceremonies and the massacre at Paris. He had now collected an army and was leading it to meet the enemy. On the 15th of April, 1574, he fell in with a force conducted by the Spanish General D'Avila, and battle followed. The result was most disastrous. The Protestant army was wholly defeated ; Lewis himself and his younger brother Henry, with Christopher, the son of the Elector Palatine, and other German allies, were killed. Throughout Belgium, wrote Sidney, such a panic was spread that it seemed as if the whole cause would be given up in despair : on the other hand there was no weak woman ever so delighted with an unexpected bit of gossip as were the Spaniards, on hearing of the victory.*

Sidney himself was deeply moved at this misfortune.

* *Correspondence*, pp. 217, 218.

His eyes were opening to the great movements of European politics, and an interest was excited which became stronger in every succeeding year of his life. He saw the great power of Spain growing greater, as it seemed, every day, gathering up all its strength and aiming at nothing less than the solid establishment over all Europe of Jesuit doctrine and its own despotic rule. Surely every nation of free men should join in strong, instant resistance against such a project. But what was the actual case? A few brave States of the Netherlands, yielding a handful of citizen soldiers, were grandly at war for truths and principles which were to them life; but elsewhere there was lamentable cowardice. Of the German Princes, some employed all their energies in moistening their throats, while many threw their time away on idle hunting-parties; others squandered wealth and time in such foolish work as altering the course of rivers. All save the Palatine had, as it seemed, resolved to ruin their people and disgrace themselves. They were dead asleep; perhaps they would soon wake up to find that their sleep was really death.*

This was the train of Sidney's thoughts. But he did not exempt England from the blame. He felt that to his own country the danger was almost as imminent, the duty quite as clear, as to the Continental States. In this mind he wrote, on the seventh of May, to his uncle, the Earl of Leicester. "Perhaps some good may come of it," he said, "and if not, I would far rather

* *Correspondence*, p. 218.

be blamed for too little wisdom than for too little patriotism."*

In the letters passing between Sidney and Languet at this time, there are constant allusions to public affairs. I have no wish, however, to attempt a detailed sketch of the politics of the day. It is enough to mark that Sidney was watching them very intently, and receiving from them lessons of highest value.

While at Venice, he had a thought of proceeding to Constantinople in order that he might see another phase of life, and one very different from any he had before observed.† But the plan was given up, and towards the end of July he went back to Germany. Then Languet came out to meet him. Philip seems to have at once proceeded to Poland, probably in company with his friend, and to have stayed there three or four months. Of his doings there is no record beyond an untrustworthy report that he engaged in Polish battles with the adjacent Muscovites. He returned to Vienna about the end of November, as appears by a letter which, on the 27th of that month, he wrote to the Earl of Leicester.‡

The winter was spent in Languet's company at Vienna. There, it is probable, he resumed the studies which had lately been neglected. He had Languet for a very kind and watchful tutor; and Edward, elder brother of the better known Sir Henry Wotton, for companion. But we have once only an insight into his

* *Correspondence*, p. 218.
† *Languetí Epistolæ*, p. 82.
‡ *Miscellaneous Works*, pp. 343—345.

employment during these months; and this has to do with a subject of no very great moment. The young men, it seems, spent much of their leisure in learning the art of horsemanship, and found a superior master in one John Peter Pugliano, who was Esquire of the Emperor's stables. Of him and his teaching Sidney has given a very pleasant sketch.

"He, according to the fertileness of the Italian wit, did not only afford us the demonstration of his practice, but sought to enrich our minds with the contemplation therein, which he thought most precious. But with none, I remember, mine ears were at any time more laden than when, either angered with slow payment or moved with our learner-like admiration, he exercised his speech in the praise of his faculty. He said soldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of soldiers. He said they were the masters of war and ornaments of peace, speedy goers and strong abiders, triumphers both in camps and courts; nay, to so unbelieved a point he proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred such wonder to a prince as to be a good horseman; skill in government was but a pedantry in comparison. Then would he add certain praises, by telling what a peerless beast the horse was, the only serviceable courtier, without flattery, the beast of most beauty, faithfulness, courage, and much more; that if I had not been a piece of a logician before I came to him, I think he would have persuaded me to have wished myself a horse. But thus much, at least, with his no few words, he drove into me, that self-love is better than any gilding to make that seem gorgeous wherein ourselves be parties." *

So much of the philosophy of Sidney's riding-master, and of his own further philosophizing thereon. The lessons were by no means useless, for he was trained by them to become one of the best horsemen in England. Nor did they occupy very much time. At the utmost, his stay in Vienna, on this occasion, did not exceed three

* *The Defence of Poesie.*

months. At the end of February or the beginning of March in the new year, 1575, the Emperor Maximilian went to Prague, there to direct the meeting of the Bohemian Diet. Thither also went Languet and Sidney, and quickly after the opening ceremony the friends parted company, the former staying to attend upon his master, the latter returning to his native land.* It was quite time for Philip to be in England again. Having received two years' leave of absence, he had exceeded it by nearly twelve months. His friends, moreover, had entertained suspicions for which we are not able now to see any good reason. They thought that he was turning Catholic. Walsingham—who, since we saw him in Paris, had become Secretary of State—wrote a very kind but very timid letter to Languet; and the sturdy Huguenot had to employ all his eloquence in persuading the English minister that his fears were entirely groundless.† As a further help towards righting him in the opinion of his kindred, Languet urged Sidney to be more particular in seeking the acquaintance of Protestant preachers, of whom he would, on his way back, meet with many who were learned and sensible men.‡

Philip returned home by a very zig-zag route. He was anxious to see as much as he could while he remained on the continent. Quitting Prague in the beginning of March, he appears to have passed through Dresden,§ and then to have turned round for an excursion to Heidelberg, whither he bore a letter of introduc-

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 113.
† Ibid., p. 103.
‡ Ibid., p. 103.
§ Ibid., p. 105.

tion to Count Lewis of Witgenstein, holding high office in Palatine's Court.* At Heidelberg, among other friends, he was acquainted with the learned and renowned Doctor Zacharias Ursinus, who marked his covetousness of time by labelling on his doorway these words, "My friend, whoever you are, if you come here, please either go away again, or give me some help in my study."† From Heidelberg Sidney went further south to Strasburg, and especially to the house of Doctor Lobetius, another learned man with whom he had long been intimate, and whom the Protestants of the day held in high honour.‡ In both places the young traveller had lodged and made friends two years before. Quitting Strasburg he turned back and travelled to Frankfort, whither Languet also came, for the sake of seeing his darling pupil once more.§ This last meeting probably took place in April or May, or perhaps it extended into both months. There is characteristic reference to it in a letter written by the old Reformer after his return to Prague, as well as some slight information about the painting which Paul Veronese had executed. "All the while that I could feast my eyes with the sight of you," he says, "I took small heed of the portrait you gave me, and for which, by the bye, I never thanked you half as much as so splendid a gift deserved. But as soon as I came back from Frankfort, my longing for you induced me to have

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, pp. 104, 107, 108.
† Ibid., pp. 103, 107, 327.
‡ Ibid., pp. 104, 107.
§ Ibid., pp. 105, 113.

it framed and hung up in a conspicuous place. That done, it looks to me so beautiful and so true a likeness of you that I feel there is nothing in the world that I prize so much. Master Vulcobius"—a friend often referred to, but whose name is all that is now known of him—"is so pleased with its elegance, that he is looking out for a painter skilful enough to copy it. I think, though, that the artist has made you appear too sad and thoughtful. I should have liked it better if your face had had a merrier look when you sat for the painting."* It seems that the young man's face seldom did wear a very merry look.

Just at this time, especially, it is not likely that there was much excess of merriment. He was parting from friends who had become very dear to him. He was going back to a home in which death had caused a heavy grief. On the 22nd of February his sister Ambrozia had died at Ludlow Castle ; and by this time the tidings must have reached him. There is no clear record of Ambrozia's age, but she was probably about fourteen or fifteen years old at the time of her death. She could hardly have been older, as several children had been born between her and Philip. Nor could she have been much younger ; for, had she been a mere child, Queen Elizabeth would not have thought of writing the kind letter of condolence which she sent to Sir Henry Sidney. †

Besides this trouble, perhaps partly in consequence

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 113, 114.

† State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. ciii. No. 13, and *Warrant Book*, vol. i. p. 83. See later, p. 110.

of it, Philip himself fell ill after parting from Languet.* This may have delayed his return home for still a few weeks more. At last he took boat at Antwerp, and reached London early in June. "On the last day of May," he said, in a letter to his friend the Count of Hannau, "fair winds conveyed me to this island nest of ours. I found all my kindred well, and the Queen, although she is certainly advancing in years, still in thorough health. To us she is just like that brand of Meleager, which, should it be extinguished, would take from us all our quietness."†

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 120.

† *Correspondence*, pp. 224, 225.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM YOUTH TO MANHOOD.

1575—1577.

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was certainly a bad man. Modern research, if it has cleared away some old rumours about him, has found convincing evidence for others quite grievous enough to prove him guilty of many evil deeds. But the guilt was not in his own day apparent. For years he was the chief favourite of Queen Elizabeth, and liked, with that sort of goodwill which always surrounds powerful men, by her other courtiers. His handsome face and figure, his elegance in dress and living, his courtly bearing to his superiors and equals, and his showy patronage of men beneath him in rank, all at the time redounded to his honour. Outside the Court, it is true, there was much talk of his empty flattery and of his haughty bearing; of his meanness and his cunning and treachery. Many stories were afloat, charging him with murder and every conceivable wickedness: but most of the reports were manifestly false; and, true or false, they were not to be uttered within royal hearing. The Queen loved Leicester as much as it was possible for her to love any one; and not without some reason. Bad as he

was, there was a measure of good in him. Within limits he was wise, and learned, and witty. He was an honest promoter of literature and art, a prudent supporter of commerce, and a generous encourager of that spirit of discovery by which the age was especially marked. His public acts were conducted with dignity, or with a splendour which might pass for dignity. It is not strange that Elizabeth liked and heaped honours upon him, or that his fellow courtiers envied him and chose him for their pattern.

Philip Sidney at any rate, up to this stage of his history, had not much personal ground for finding fault with his uncle. While a lad, he had been very kindly treated by him. It seems that the busy courtier took almost greater care of his nephew than might have been expected. And now that Sidney was a man, and that his manly excellence, visible to all, gave promise that he would reach high in public life, Leicester was honestly eager to forward his interests and to lead him to the summit of courtly eminence. The Earl's ways were often crooked, and such as the young man was too noble to walk in, or, if he did walk in them, to pursue with any satisfaction to himself. But we cannot wonder that his eye was dazzled, that he magnified all virtue that was discernible, and saw little or nothing of the vice. At this time and during many subsequent years, I imagine that he felt a very honest admiration for his uncle, and was anxious to submit to all the influence which the other was desirous to exert.

Here is indication of one part of Sidney's training which we must note carefully if we would understand

the growth of his character. We may consider it as beginning with the day of his return to London. It was upon the earl's introduction that he was admitted into the gayest and most select circle of the Elizabethan Court; and, as it happened, he returned just soon enough to be a witness of rare gaiety.

His uncle was very busy. The Queen had determined that this summer she would travel through Warwickshire and the neighbouring parts, and, among other employment of her time, would visit the stately mansion of Kenilworth, which, thirteen years before, she had given to her favourite. The Earl, eager on this occasion that no pains should be spared in making all possible display of loyalty, was resolved that this should be such an entertainment as a subject had never yet given to a sovereign. Perhaps he succeeded. At any rate, the spectacles and festivities that he provided have been very seldom rivalled.

Of Sidney's share in them we have, unfortunately, no detailed record. We only know that he was present with the Court both at Kenilworth and during the subsequent progress.* A few specimens of the wonderful things he saw and heard must, therefore, be given in illustration of the holiday part of that courtier life in which he was now learning to move.

The entertainment began on Saturday, the 9th of July, 1575. On that day, Queen Elizabeth, who had left London shortly before, was met by the Earl, and conducted to Kenilworth. Having dined and hunted

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 120, 132.

on the road, she entered the castle at eight o'clock in the evening. A fair maiden, dressed as a sybil, came forth to greet her with a rhyming prophecy, better in spirit than in poetry. Then six huge trumpeters, each of them being eight feet tall, we are told, advanced, and out of instruments, in keeping with their size, uttered a noisy welcome. The porter of the outer gate, clad like Hercules, made feigned resistance, but was soon overcome by the beauty of the royal countenance.

"What dainty darling's here? O God! a peerless pearl!
No wordly wight, no doubt; some sovereign goddess sure.
E'en face, e'en hand, e'en eye, e'en other features all,
Yea, beauty, grace and cheer, yea, port and majesty,
Show all some heavenly peer, with virtues all beset.
Come, come, most perfect paragon, pass on with joy and bliss!
Most worthy welcome goddess guest, whose presence gladdeneth all,
Have here, have here, both club and keys; myself, my ward, I yield,
E'en gates and all, yea, lord himself submit and seek your shield."

Flattery almost as rough, and therefore almost as pleasant to the Queen, was uttered by the Lady of the Lake, who appeared upon the water, attended by her nymphs, and this part of the pageant was closed with "a delectable harmony" of hautboys, shalms, cornets, and other loud music, which continued while her Majesty rode on to the inner gate. There further tribute of obedience was paid. Sylvanus, in token of submission, offered a splendid cage, full of all sorts of dainty wild birds. Pomona held a large bowl, laden with apples, beans, walnuts, and all other fruits. Ceres brought such things as wheat and peas. Bacchus held clusters of grapes and flagons of wine. Neptune supported a tank in which were all sorts of fish and shell-fish, from oysters to salmon. Mars wore every kind of

warlike gear. Phœbus presented a small bay-tree, hung with numberless instruments of music. And as soon as the visitors were housed, the first day's entertainment ended with the homage of Jupiter himself, presented with such clatter of guns and discharging of fire-works that many thought the end of the world was come. Then all slept soundly.

Next day being Sunday, the forenoon was spent in church-going, and the after-dinner-time in such sober amusement as music and dancing. At night Jupiter made fresh descent, and it seemed by comparison as if on the former occasion he had forgotten to perform his work, and now came down to do it in earnest. It was a grand display ; what with the burning darts flying hither and thither, the great stars shooting everywhere, the sparks flying upwards and downwards, there was such a general glittering confusion as never before now had been seen or heard of.

Throughout the following week new entertainments were abundantly presented. On Thursday there was a bear-baiting, much to the Queen's fancy. "With fending and proving, with plucking and hugging, scratching and biting, by plain tooth and nail on one side and the other, such expense of blood and leather was there between them, as a month's licking, I ween, will not recover." So writes one who saw the strife, and he goes on to say : "It was a sport very pleasant of these beasts, to see the bear with his pink eyes leering after his enemies' approach, the nimbleness and weight of the dog to take his advantage, and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid the assaults. If he

were bitten in one place, how would he pinch in another to get free ; that if he were taken once, then what shift, with biting, with clawing, with roaring, tossing and tumbling, he would work to wrench himself from them ; and when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice, with the blood and the slaver about his physiognomy, was matter of a goodly relief ! "

There were wrestlings and Italian feats of skill, performed by a man who seemed to have no backbone at all, so deftly did he twist about. There was a marriage ceremony, which caused the Queen and her courtiers some good frolic. There were splendid hunting excursions. There was more uttering of addresses by nymphs and satyrs, and gods and goddesses. There was a minstrel, suitably apparelled, who rehearsed the whole story of King Arthur's contest with King Ryence. There was Captain Cox, a wonderful man on his hobby horse, wonderfully skilled in all the legendary and romantic lore of the day, and of all former days ; master of every tale concerning Arthur and Lancelot, Robin Hood and Adam Bell ; with a hundred or more ancient songs in his head ; learned also in philosophy, astronomy, and every other hidden science ; and furthermore the best taster of ale and wine that was ever known.

He it was who took the lead in a play performed by the Coventry men, and having for its subject the overthrow of Danish insolence and cruelty in King Ethelred's day. It was chosen specially for presentment before the maiden Queen because it showed how valiantly our English women had, in old days, behaved themselves for love of their country. A long and grisly battle

was enacted, and in the course of it, we learn, many a good bang was got and given on either side. Twice the Danes seemed victorious; but at last they were beaten down, and led away in triumph by a troop of Amazons. So great was the Queen's pleasure, that she gave to the performers five marks of money, besides a couple of bucks for their dinner.

After witnessing the spectacle, the courtly company also had need of food. Of entertainments offered to the palate during this royal visit to Kenilworth, there is less record than one might expect to see; but on this occasion, we find, there was furnished "a most delicious and ambrosial banquet," at which three hundred different sorts of dishes were set upon the tables. But of all of them her Majesty hardly tasted one. She cared not over much for eating, and she much disliked to see others gorging themselves and struggling for the best viands, as here they did.

We may not loiter much longer at Kenilworth, or it would be pleasant to picture the chief members of the lordly gathering. Nearest of all to the Queen would of course be her host, and if ever Leicester took pride in his position as chief royal favourite, it must have been now, when such splendid evidence was being given to his mistress of his chivalrous loyalty, and to all the world of his princely bearing. Among a crowd of other guests were Mr. Secretary Walsingham, Thomas Sackville Lord Buckhurst, Sir Francis Knollys, then Treasurer to the Queen's household, with his daughter, the Countess of Essex. If Burghley was present at all, it was only for a short time, since matters of State

detained him in London; but his son, Thomas Cecil, received knighthood during the visit. Of course Leicester's own kindred were in attendance. His brother, the Earl of Warwick, was there for pleasure, and his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Sidney, was present on business. The visitor most notable of all to us, however, was his nephew, Mr. Philip Sidney.*

To Philip, newly come from the sight of foreign Courts, these English spectacles must have been strangely interesting. There was everything to please him. Wherever witnessed, the shows would have been welcome enough; but their attraction was immensely increased by the knowledge that in each one the honour of his kindred was being reflected. With the lively and witty talk that went round, also, and with the coquettish dances into which he was paired with the gayest and handsomest ladies in the Queen's train, he might well be pardoned for turning giddy. I think Languet would not have reproached him for too much seriousness if he could have watched him through these nineteen days of ceaseless pleasure.

On Wednesday, the 27th of July, the Royal party quitted Kenilworth. Of all the entertainments furnished during the time, without question the most poetical was the last one. As Elizabeth rode out of the grounds, one in the likeness of Sylvanus made a long and pleasant speech, and, after him, Deep-desire, fabled to have been long since transformed into a holly-bush, addressed her Majesty :—

"Stay, stay your hasty steps, O Queen without compare,
And hear him talk whose trusty tongue consumed is with care.

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 120, 132.

I am that wretch Desire whom neither death could daunt,
Nor dole decay, nor dread delay, nor feigned cheer enchant ;
Whom neither care could quench, nor fancy force to change,
And therefore turned into this tree, which sight perchance runs strange."

He went on to describe the heavy grief which spread among the gods and goddesses, and nymphs and satyrs, at thought of Elizabeth's departure.

" At first Diana wept such brinish bitter tears,
That all her nymphs did doubt her death,—her face the sign yet bears ;
Dame Flora fell on ground, and bruised her woeful breast ;
Yea, Pan did break his oaten pipes ; Sylvanus and the rest,
Which walk amid these woods, for grief did roar and cry ;
And Jove, to show what moan he made, with thundering cracked the sky."

Therefore Desire was sent to entreat her further stay. If it might be, all the people of heaven, and all the dwellers in the air, would be proud companions and obedient servants to her.

But the Queen could not be persuaded. So Deep-desire uttered a final dirge :—

" Come muses, come, and help me to lament ;
Come woods, come waves, come hills, come doleful dales ;
Since life and death are both against me bent,
Come Gods, come men, bear witness of my bales,
Oh, heavenly nymphs, come help my heavy heart,
With sighs to see Dame Pleasure thus depart.
" If death or dole could daunt a deep desire,
If privy pangs could counterpoise my plaint,
If tract of time a true intent could tire,
Or cramps of care a constant mind could taint,
Oh, then might I at will here live and serve,
Although my deeds did more delight deserve.
" But out, alas ! no gripes of grief suffice
To break in twain this harmless heart of mine ;
For though delight be banished from mine eyes,

Yet lives desire, whom pains can never pine.
Oh, strange effects ! I live which seem to die,
Yet died to see my dear delight go by.
" Then farewell sweet, for whom I taste such sour ;
Farewell delight, for whom I dwell in dole,
Freewill farewell, farewell my fancy's flower ;
Farewell content, whom cruel cares control ;
Oh, farewell life ; delightful death farewell ;
I die in heaven, yet live in darksome hell." *

* I have drawn most of these particulars from two very pleasant narratives by eye-witnesses, one entitled " *The Princely Pleasures at the Courte at Kenilworth : That is to saye, the Copies of all such Verses, Proses, or Poetical Inventions, and other Devices of Pleasures, as were there devised, and presented by sundry Gentlemen, before the Quene's Majestie, in the year* 1575," written by George Gascoigne, the poet, and printed in 1576 ; the other, "*A Letter : wherein part of the Entertainment unto the Queen's Majesty, at Killingworth Castle, in Warwick Sheer, in this Soomerz Progress,* 1575, *is signified : from the friend officer attendant in the Court unto hiz friend a Citizen and Merchant of London,*" first correctly printed by Nichols in his *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth* (2nd ed. 1823, vol. ii. pp. 420—484). Laneham or Langham, the author of the latter work, was a follower of the Earl of Leicester, Lady Mary Sidney, and others, and therefore must have been well known to Philip. This circumstance must be my slender excuse for copying his quaint account of his day's occupation ; the true reason being the valuable insight which it gives into the real life of a humble courtier, a courtier of courtiers. He says, " A mornings I rise ordinarily at seven o'clock. Then ready, I go into the chapel. Soon after eight I get me comfortably into my lord's chamber, or into my lord's presidents. There at the cupboard, after I have eaten the manchet served over night for livery (for I dare be as bold, I promise you, as any of my friends the servants there ; and indeed could I have fresh if I would tarry, but I am of wont jolly and dry a mornings), I drink me a good bowl of ale. When in a sweet pot it is defecated by all night's standing, the drink is the better, take that of me : and a morsel in the morning, with a sound draught, is very wholesome and good for the eye-sight. Then I am as fresh all the forenoon after as I had eaten a whole piece of beef. Now, sir, if the Council sit, I am at hand ; wait at an inch, I warrant you. If any make babbling, Peace,' say I, 'whoot where

From Kenilworth the Queen proceeded to Lichfield, where she stayed eight days, and then went on to Chartley Castle, the seat of Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex. The Countess of Essex, as we have noticed, was present at the entertainment furnished by Leicester, and now it was only a reasonable compliment that she

ye are?" If I take a listener, or a prier in at the chinks or at the lock-hole, I am by and by in the bones of him. But now they keep good order; they know me well enough. If he be a friend or such a one as I like, I make him sit down by me on a form or a chest; let the rest walk, a God's name. And here do my languages now and then stand me in good stead, my French, my Spanish, my Dutch, and my Latin; sometimes among ambassador's men, if their master be within the Council; sometimes with the ambassador himself, if he bid call his lackey, or ask me what's o'clock. And, I warrant ye, I answer him roundly, that they marvel to see such a fellow there; then laugh I and say nothing. Dinner and supper I have twenty places to go to, and heartily prayed too. Sometime get I to Master Pinner—by my faith, a worshipful gentleman, and as careful for his charge as any her Highness hath. There find I always good store of very good viands: we eat and be merry, thank God and the Queen. Himself in feeding very temperate and moderate as ye shall see any; and yet, by your leave, of a dish, as of cold pigeon or so, that hath come to him of meat more than he looked for, I have seen him even so by and by surfeit, as he hath plucked off his napkin, wiped his knife, and ate not a morsel more; like enough to stick in his stomach a two days after. . . . In afternoons and a nights, sometime am I with the right worshipful Sir George Howard, as good a gentleman as any lives; and sometimes at my good Lady Sidney's chamber, a noblewoman that I am as much bound unto as any poor man may be unto so gracious a lady; and sometimes in some other place; but always among the gentlewomen by my good will—O, ye know that comes always of a gentle spirit. And when I see company according, then can I be as lively too: sometime I foot it with dancing: now with my gittern or else with my cittern, then at the virginals: ye know nothing comes amiss to me. Then carrol I up a song withal, then by and by they come flocking about me like bees to honey; and ever they cry, 'Another, good Langham, another!' Shall I tell you when I see Mistress—(A, see a mad knave: I had almost told all!) that she

should offer hospitality to her Sovereign, her recent host and all the other courtiers in the Royal train. But the Earl was now in Ireland, where, in a few days, Sir Henry Sidney was to join him. Essex had been in Ireland for more than two years. Displeased at the favour which, to his own disparagement, was

gives only but one eye or one ear; why then, man, am I blest: my grace, my courage, my cunning is doubled. She says, sometime, she likes it, and then I like it much the better; it doth me good to hear how well I can do. And, to say truth, what with mine eyes, as I can amorously gloat it, with my Spanish *sospires*, my French *heighes*, mine Italian *dulcets*, my Dutch *hovez*" [*Hoofshied*, is the euphonious Dutch term for courtship], "my double release, my high reaches, my fine feigning, my deep diapason, my wanton warbles, my running, my timing, my tuning, and my twinkling, I can gratify the masters as well as the proudest of them, and was yet never stained, I thank God. By my troth, countrymen, it is sometimes high midnight ere I can get from them. And thus have I told you most of my trade, all the live-long day." Not quite all: he adds a few sentences more of his welcome gossip about himself. "Herewith meant I fully to bid you farewell, had not this doubt come to my mind, that here remains a doubt in you, which I ought, methought, in any wise to clear, which is, you marvel, perchance to see me so bookish. Let me tell you in a few words. I went to school, forsooth, both at Paul's and also at Saint Anthony's. In the fifth form, past Æsop Fables I wiss, read Terence *Vos istæc intro auferte*, and began with my Virgil *Tityre, tu patulæ*: I could my rules, could construe, and parse with the best of them. Since that, as partly ye know, have I traded the feat of merchandize in sundry countries, and so got me languages; which do so little hinder my Latin, as (I thank God) have much increased it. I have leisure sometimes, when I tend not upon the Council, whereby now look I on one book, now on another. Stories I delight in; the more ancient and rare, the more likesome unto me. If I told you I liked William of Malmsbury so well because of his diligence and ambiguity, perchance you would construe it because I love malmsey so well. But in faith it is not so; for sipped I no more sack and sugar (and yet never but with company), than I do malmsey, I should not blush so much a day as I do. You know my mind."

being heaped upon Leicester, anxious also to be about some useful work, in the spring of 1573 he had sought and obtained employment of an unusual sort. At his own cost he had equipped and supported a small body of men who, under his leadership, were to act as protectors of justice in the most turbulent part of the turbulent island. One would have thought that Elizabeth would have highly prized so generous an undertaking: as it was, her conduct was altogether characteristic. She permitted him to go, but, when he was there, she allowed him to be subjected to all possible indignities. She thanked him in outrageous terms for his loyal spirit, and when he desired to raise money for commencing the business, she was ready to lend it to him; but she must have good security for the loan, she must receive interest at ten per cent., and, in default of proper payment, she must take compensation which a Shylock would not have thought too moderate.* Essex spent the 10,000*l.* which he borrowed on these terms, and 25,000*l.* more, the issue being the great impoverishment of his property and the ruin of his health and happiness. The Royal conscience must now and then have been troubled during this visit to Chartley Castle; and, perhaps there was some thought of offering the restitution which was due, while Elizabeth, on the 6th of August, wrote in these terms to her sometime favourite:—

"If lines could value life, or thanks could answer praise, I should esteem my pen's labour the best employed time that many years hath

* The Document is in the State Paper Office. Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Earls of Essex* (1853), vol. i. pp. 27, 28.

lent me. But to supply the want that both these carrieth, a right judgment of upright dealing shall lengthen the scarcity that either of the other wanteth. Deem, therefore, cousin mine, that the search of your honour, with the danger of your breath, hath not been bestowed on so ungrateful a prince that will not both consider the one and reward the other.

"Your most loving cousin and sovereign, E.R." *

There is no record of Chartley festivities akin to those which have made Kenilworth so illustrious, and we may safely conclude that none were offered. The hostess would show all courteous bearing to her Royal guest; but she would hardly go out of her way to pay unusual and unexpected compliments. There was not much goodwill between the two. The Countess was daughter of Sir Francis Knollys, whose wife was niece to Anne Boleyn, and thus she was cousin to her Sovereign. From her father she inherited much sturdy independence of spirit, and it may be that she thought herself by her maternal ancestry an equal to the Queen, whom she certainly excelled in sprightliness and beauty. She had given displeasure at Court, fourteen years ago, by winning the love of her present husband; and perhaps already Elizabeth was beginning to suspect the passion which even now Leicester seems to have felt for Lady Essex. Here was the prelude of a tragi-comedy to be enacted some years later.

But we have more concern with the children now playing about Chartley Castle, than with the Countess herself. Besides an infant who died early, probably was dead before this time, her family comprised four members.

* Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Earls of Essex* (1853), vol. i., p. 119.

The eldest was Penelope, but twelve years old; and after her came Dorothy, Robert, and Walter, whose several ages were now about ten, eight and six.* Robert lived to be the splendid and ill-fated Earl of Essex—"great England's glory, and the world's high wonder," as Spenser styled him. Penelope, as Stella, was to influence, as much as any other person in the world, Sir Philip Sidney's life and character.

It was doubtless during this visit of the Court to Chartley, that Sidney first saw the beautiful girl who was hereafter to be queen over him, with a haughtier sovereignty than Elizabeth's.

> "To her he vow'd the service of his days;
> On her he spent the riches of his wit;
> For her he made hymns of immortal praise;
> Of only her he sung, he thought, he writ.
> Her, and but her, of love he worthy deemed;
> For all the rest but little he esteemed." †

Penelope was in her thirteenth year and Philip in his twenty-first, ages not reckoned out of proportion, and hardly premature, in the Elizabethan day. Marriages were often contracted as early in life, and we may well imagine that the coy maiden was already almost womanly in her bearing. Yet it would be vain to speculate upon the thoughts which arose in either during this first brief intimacy. We know that impressions were then made that gave the starting point to a long series

* Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Earls of Essex* (1853), vol. ii., p. 9. Penelope was born some time in 1563; Dorothy on the 17th of September, 1565; Robert on the 10th November, 1567; Walter on the 7th of October, 1569.

† Spenser, *Astrophel*, ll. 61—66.

of incidents. Their rehearsal, however, as far as trace of them survives, will find its place in later pages. For the present let Philip's own pleasant sonnet, written some years later, be received as sober history.

"Not at first sight, nor with a dribbed shot,
Love gave the wound which, while I breathe, will bleed:
But known worth did in mine of time proceed,
Till, by degrees, it had full conquest got.
I saw and liked; I liked, but loved not;
I loved, but straight did not what love decreed;
At length to love's decrees I, forced, agreed.
Yet with repining at so partial lot.
Now, e'en that footstep of lost liberty
Is gone, and now, like slave born Muscovite,
I call it praise to suffer tyranny
And now employ the remnant of my wit
To make myself believe that all is well,
While, with a feeling skill, I paint my hell." *

Philip, however, in addition to the charms of Penelope Devereux, had some other occupation for his thoughts during the short stay at Chartley. Here he parted from his father. From the autumn of 1571 till now, Sir Henry Sidney appears to have worked quietly as Lord President of Wales. In consideration of his good service done to the State it had, as we have seen, been designed, in the spring of 1572, to make a Baron of him; but he had declined the honour, as he had not means wherewith to maintain it with dignity. To offer it, as it had been offered, was almost a mockery, and he seems to have received it as such. There is, however, welcome indication of the kindness latent in the Royal heart, notwithstanding its general hardness and selfish-

* *Astrophel and Stella*, Sonnet ii.

ness, in a letter written to him by Queen Elizabeth a few months earlier in this year, on the occasion of his daughter Ambrozia's death.

"GOOD SIDNEY,

"Although we are well assured that with your wisdom and great experience of worldly chances and necessities, nothing can happen unto you so heavy but you can and will bear them as they ought to be rightly taken; namely, such as happen by the special appointment and work of Almighty God, which He hath lately shown by taking unto Him from your company, a daughter of yours; yet, forasmuch as we conceive the grief you yet feel thereby, as in such cases natural parents are accustomed, we would not have you ignorant, to ease your sorrow as much as may be, how we take part of your grief upon us: whereof these our letters unto you are witness; and we will use no further persuasions to confirm you respecting the good counsel yourself can take of yourself, but to consider that God doth nothing evil; to whose holy will all is subject, and must yield at times to us uncertain. He hath left unto you the comfort of one daughter of very good hope, whom, if you shall think good to remove from those parts of unpleasant air, if it be so, into better in these parts, and will send her unto us before Easter, or when you shall think good, assure yourself that we will have a special care of her, not doubting but, as you are well persuaded of our favour towards yourself, so will we make further demonstration thereof in her, if you will send her unto us, and so comforting you for the one, and leaving this our offer of good will to your own consideration for the other we commit you to Almighty God." *

I have broken through the strict order of chronology for the sake of quoting this kind letter. It shows Elizabeth in her best mind. It is probable that her generous offer to take charge of Mary, Sir Henry's only surviving daughter, was complied with gladly. The Lord President himself, moreover, began to receive very different treatment from that which had been accorded to him during the three previous years. The chief

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth, Warrant Book*, vol. i., p. 83.

reason for this was to be found in the new difficulties which had lately sprung up in Ireland, and which none but he seemed able to subdue. He was summoned to be present with the Court and to take honourable place in the Royal councils. At length, upon the recall of Sir William FitzWilliam, then Lord Deputy of Ireland, he was appointed for a third time to the office. On the last day of July, 1575, he was sworn of the Irish Council, and on the 5th of August, while the Queen was at Chartley, he received his patent.* He followed the Royal party for a few days longer in order that he might receive personal instructions from his mistress and attend to other matters. About the 12th of August, "taking leave of her Majesty and kissing her sacred hands, with most gracious and comfortable words from her," he parted from the Court and his family at Dudley Castle,† in time to reach Ireland on the 8th of September, and enter upon employment in which he was to be engaged for just three years.

Philip, in company with his mother and sister, appears to have followed the Queen in her progress. From Chartley the Court turned to visit Stafford, where entertainment was offered by Edward, Lord Stafford. Thence the route was past Dudley, Chillington, and Hartlebury Castle, the residence of the Bishop of the diocese, to Worcester. For eight days Elizabeth received very loyal treatment from the people of Worcester, and three weeks were spent in visiting

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xlv., No. 31.

† Ibid., vol. clix. No. 1, fol. 20.

other places on the road. By the 11th of September she had reached Woodstock, the scene of her girlish confinement, whither the Earl of Leicester had gone before to make ready for her fit reception. Soon after that she returned to London, doubtless bringing Sidney with her.

At any rate he was in London by the beginning of November, when he wrote to Hubert Languet.* Except a short letter which he had sent on the 12th of June, to say that he had reached London safely,† this was the only communication he had made to Languet since leaving Germany, and the old man naturally felt aggrieved. "I might fairly be distressed," he wrote from Vienna on the 28th of November, "by the ingratitude of those whom I thought to be my friends; but I am much more than distressed by this obstinate silence of yours, since for five or six months I have received nothing from you, although I have often written to you and you have written to others. I fear I have done something which has quite estranged you from me; for if not, you could surely in all that time have spared one hour to your old friend. I know that you had won not only my very kindest wishes, but also my highest admiration, and I used to prophesy to my friends concerning those splendid mental gifts with which God has freely adorned you; I thought myself wonderfully fortunate, in my wretched, toilsome old age, in getting to know you and even, as I believed, to be loved by you. But now, if through any foolishness

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 139.

† Ibid., p. 120.

or ill-breeding of mine, I have lost that which I prized most of all, I must just weep out my misery." * In language like this, however exaggerated, there is evidence of unusual and very real affection, as well as indication of rare worth in him who inspired it. Languet had friends of his own stamp, and of rank far higher than his own, in plenty. With nearly every Protestant sovereign in Europe he was intimate, and every Protestant doctor was proud if he could be called the friend of one so wise and learned. Yet his whole heart seemed to be given to this youth of twenty. From him he endured all sorts of neglect, and all his faults he took upon himself.

Languet certainly deserved a reply. He had written several letters full of pleasant talk, and overflowing with kind feeling. On the 13th of August, after thanking Sidney for the note which he had received in July, he went on to say: "It contains such proof of your love for me, and moreover is so elegantly and ably written, that it alone would have induced me to love and admire you, if the gentleness of your manners, the strength of your judgment, and the extent of your knowledge, far in advance of your years, had not already done so. I know it is almost absurd of me to ask you, amid the turmoil of the Court, and with so many temptations to misuse time, not wholly to give up exercising yourself in Latin; yet, as this letter shows what progress you have made in it, and how well you can write when you give your mind to it,† if you quite neglect the study, I

* Ibid., p. 137.

† In one of the first letters written by Sidney to Languet, he

shall be obliged to blame you for giving way to laziness and pleasure-seeking. See what thanks I give you for your welcome letter,—trying to persuade you to apply yourself to pursuits which, in men of your condition, are thought to show want of common sense!"*

In another letter, written from Prague on the 18th of September, Languet spoke much more strongly about the risk of giving way to laziness and pleasure-seeking. After complaining of Sidney's long silence consequent upon his following the Queen in her courtly progress, he added, "I daresay you will think me unkind for urging you to put aside the pleasure of meeting with your friends while you do such hard work as writing a few letters; and I fear this letter, instead of being acceptable to you, will seem to fall like a black cloud upon your idleness. But, my darling Sidney, you must not forget the motto, *Vitanda est improba siren, Desidia.*" †

At length Sidney wrote to his friend; but, alas, the letter is lost. Full of gossip about the spectacles that he had lately seen and the bustling occurrences of the past few months,‡ it would have been very valuable reading if it had come down to us. These things he urged as an excuse for not having written sooner; but Languet was not well satisfied. "Cæsar was better and more fully employed," he drily observed, "when he wrote his *Commentaries*. Out of all that time could not you spare

complained of the difficulty he had in expressing himself in a language with which he was not familiar.—*Correspondence*, p. 203.

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 120.

† Ibid., pp. 132, 133.

‡ Ibid., p. 139.

a single hour to friends in whom you knew there was so much love for you, and who care a great deal more for you than for themselves? At the cost of one dance in a month, you could have done all that was expected of you! Last winter you spent three or four months with me. Just think how many eminent authors you studied in that little time, and what good came to you in reading them. If in so short a space you could learn so many things which would be helpful to you in the proper conduct of life, could not that hinder you from burying yourself in foolish pleasure? . . . . . Never think that God has adorned you with so much talent in order that you may let it rot in indolence; but remember always that He expects better work from you than from others with whom He has dealt less freely." But the honest Languet felt that his language was growing unreasonably stern: after all, it was not so very wicked a thing to enjoy the life Heaven had meant to be enjoyable. "You see," he added, in lighter mood, "how unkindly I am answering your letter, so full of kindness. I do thank you for it, although I cannot suffer you to run the risk of squandering your powers in mere idleness. I never doubted that you would at once secure the admiration of all your friends, and of all the noblest men about you. In this particular your letter tells me nothing of which I was not sure before: but I am very glad indeed to be told it." *

In a former letter, Languet had joked with Sidney about marriage, and commended to him the example of

* Ibid., pp. 139, 140.

their friend, Edward Wotton, who had just taken a wife.* Sidney seems to have gaily sent back some very vehement protestations, none the less vehement because very different thoughts formed in reality the undercurrent of his mind. Languet answered:—"What you say in jest about a wife, I take in earnest. I think you had better not be so sure. More cautious men than you are sometimes caught; and, for my part, I am very willing that you should be caught, that so you might give to your country sons like yourself. But whatever is to happen in this matter, I pray God that it may turn out well and happily. You see how nobly our friend Wotton has passed through his trial; his boldness seems to convict you of cowardice. However, destiny had a good deal to do with these things; therefore you must not suppose that by your own foresight you can manage things so as to be altogether happy, and to have everything according to your wishes."†

True enough always, and especially true in Sidney's case. But, we can well imagine there were some wishes even now astir in his heart, which he would not be eager to communicate to his Huguenot monitor, perhaps not even to his mother, with whom he was now living in London. A building that overlooked the Thames, and stood exactly opposite to Paul's Wharf, was Sir Henry Sidney's town house. From it there was good access, either by land or by water, to the Court, when that was held in London. And it was the Queen's

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 127. † Ibid., p. 140.

especial desire that Lady Sidney and her daughter Mary should be in attendance upon the Court.*

Poor Lady Sidney! Her life was not an easy one: she was always in some sort of trouble. In her youth, troubles weighty enough to break a heart of ordinary strength, had fallen upon her. Her father and one of her brothers had perished on the scaffold. Another brother had been released from imprisonment in the Tower just in time to die of illness there contracted. And now that one of her two surviving brothers stood very high in the royal favour, he does not seem to have much cared for her. Perhaps she saw more clearly than most strangers could into the selfish mind of the Earl of Leicester; at any rate she had but little dealing with him. Of course she met him on friendly terms; and at festivals like that at Kenilworth she would naturally be present to take sisterly place. But in time of difficulty she never, that I can find, applied to him for help; generally her appeal was to Lord Burghley, or it might be to Sir Christopher Hatton, or Mr. Edward Dyer, or some other friend who could be trusted. She had a noble husband, it is true, and she could take a just pride in his brave, unselfish deeds. But he was very often far away from her, so overdone with work, and so harassed by royal neglect and caprice, that he could not do much to smooth for her the rugged paths of life. His very unselfishness was cause of one great trouble, for it made them poor, and Elizabeth

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. cviii. No. 74; *Warrant Book*, vol. i. p. 83.

expected them to live in state and to use courtly observances, beyond their means. "My present estate is such," she wrote on one occasion, in a very touching letter to the Lord Treasurer, "by reason of my debts, as I cannot go forward with any honourable course of living;" yet she must go forward, "for that I had, by her Majesty's commandment, prepared myself to attend the Court. But seeing it hath pleased her Majesty to hold this hard hand towards me, I am again thus bold to trouble your lordship for your comfortable direction how I may best in this case deal with her Majesty. For as I have often written and said, so must I still confess, I am partly bound to so great trust in your noble self as I cannot yield to repair to any other; though I am presently greatly to seek, for my own part, what else to do than sorrow much her Majesty's unkindness towards me, because it brings me no small disgrace amongst such as are not determined to wish me well. Therefore, my very good lord, I humbly beseech you to vouchsafe to show me so much favour as to let me know your opinion what your lordship gathereth thereof, and what course it seemeth good unto you I shall take; which, accordingly, I shall address myself unto, as to one in whose good and honourable advice my whole hope abideth. Trusting I shall not offend you herewith, since my heart is determined to honour you with all thankfulness, and so craving pardon for my long troubling you with my rude scribbling, I heartily wish your lordship all your most noble heart's desires." *

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. cviii. No. 74.

Of this sort were Lady Mary Sidney's letters to Lord Burghley. To us it seems very strange, very hard-hearted, that Queen Elizabeth should have insisted upon the attendance at her Court of any lady who found herself too poor to live in such style as was needful to her proper dignity. But the case seems much worse when we remember how Lady Sidney had another, perhaps even stronger, reason for wishing to live in privacy. Her broken health and scarred face, consequent upon her former nursing of her Majesty in the small-pox, ought surely to have been excuse enough.

Yet now, if ever, she must have moved cheerfully in these gay circles, since everywhere she was hearing praise of the grace and handsomeness of her son Philip and her daughter Mary.

Mary was at this time about twenty, and properly installed in Court life. We may fairly guess that she who, when an old woman, could entrance the world by the sweet beauty of her face, the gentleness of her womanly heart, the strength and keenness of her wit, and the depth and breadth of her learning, was not lost sight of now. But we can do no more than guess, for history is still silent about her.

And if we would follow Philip into the gaieties of the Court, it must be partly by help of imagination. All we know is, that he did win favour everywhere,—with Queen and subject. One indication of this appears in a letter which his father wrote to him from Ireland in March, 1576. The letter introduced its bearer, an Irishman with a true Irish name, Sir Cormoch MacTeigh MacCarthy, who had come from Dublin to London to

urge some suit, on whose behalf Philip was asked by his father to employ his influence with the Court.*

Another and very different indication of Sidney's position has come down to us undated; but it may, I think, be safely attributed to this stage of his history. It is a shoemaker's bill, which, for the sake of its oddness, no less than for its intrinsic interest, claims to be copied here. It runs thus:—

MR. PHILIP SIDNEY.

First, for two pair of pantoffles and two pair of shoes for yourself	6*s.*	8*d.*
Item, one pair of strong shoes for yourself		16*d.*
Item, for one pair of boots for Mr. Weddell	6*s.*	8*d.*
Item, for one pair of shoes for him		12*d.*
Item, for four pair of shoes for your servant, the footman	4*s.*	8*d.*
Item, for four pair of shoes for Thomas, your man	4*s.*	
Item, for one pair of white shoes and one pair of pantoffles for yourself	4*s.*	8*d.*
Item, for one pair of Spanish leather shoes, double soled		20*d.*
Item, for three pair of shoes for three of the men	3*s.*	
Item, for one pair of pumps for Griffin, the man		8*d.*
Item, for one pair of Spanish leather shoes for yourself		20*d.*
Item, for a pair of shoes for your footman		14*d.*
Item, for soling a pair of shoes for Thomas		8*d.*
Item, for one pair of buckled boots at, the pair,	8*s.*	
and one pair of winter boots for yourself	15*s.*	
Item, eight pair of Spanish leather slippers for yourself	17*s.*	8*d.*
Item, for four pair of shoes for Thomas	4*s.*	
Item, for six pair of shoes for Thomas, footman	7*s.*	
Item, for soling a pair of shoes for Thomas, your man		8*d.*

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 263.

The bill not only gives us a glimpse of the sort of articles worn by Sidney and provided for his attendants, and tells us the relative price of them. There is yet more significance in the indorsement of the document, showing, as it does, the pecuniary position he now held. To his father's steward he wrote :—

"I have so long owed this bearer this expressed sum of money as I am forced, for the safeguard of my credit, to request you to let him have it presently, and this shall be your sufficient discharge to be received at Midsummer quarter. I pray you, as you love me, perform it. By me, PHILIP SIDNEY."*

Sidney was now walking on his white shoes busily and daintily in and out of Court. But he does not seem to have yet reached so high a place in the Queen's favour as we find him holding at a later date. There is some inference to be drawn from the fact that, although his mother and sister made the customary presents to Elizabeth on New Year's Day of 1576, there is no record of any having been tendered by him.† Perhaps at about that time he had even fallen into some discredit from his friendship with a nobleman now in disgrace.

The offender was the Earl of Essex, who had returned from Ireland in the autumn of 1575, and was at present residing in London. Having been virtually deprived of the employment about which he had spent great part of his resources, he had come to make reasonable demands upon his Sovereign. Boldly, and with dignity, he made frequent suit for work whereby he might do

* Zouch, p. 331.

† Nicholls, *Royal Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. ii. pp. 1, 2.

good service to his country and receive such honest wages as might help to the restoration of his fortunes. So much he considered due to him. "I assure myself," he wrote, on the 13th of January, "that your Majesty, that hath uttered so honourable speeches of me and my service,—that hath stopped my course upon your own notion, not without some blemish to my credit,—who might have prevented with your only commandment both your charge and mine in the beginning,—will now so deal in the end as may increase my duty and prayer for you, and enlarge your own fame for cherishing your nobility and rewarding of true service." * That was plain language to utter to the Queen, who of all others was most covetous of servile homage and fulsome adulation from her subjects. She liked least of all just now, when Christmas gaieties were rife, and every one else was heaping up compliments, to be openly charged with injustice. It was as much as prudent, well meaning Burghley could do to gain her consent to some sort of compromise. But Essex would have no compromise. He claimed his due, and he would take no less.

In this state matters rested for some months. The Earl had his family brought up from Chartley to his town residence, which was Durham House, situated in the Strand.† There he spent most of his time, and was visited by the few friends who cared to be friendly with him through his misfortunes. For Sidney it was easier to take boat at Paul's Wharf, and pass up the Thames as far as Durham House, than to go farther on to the

* Devereux, *Lives of the Earls of Essex*, vol. i. p. 128.

† The site is marked by the present Essex Street.

Palace. And here there was more real pleasure for him. We have seen, and we shall see still more, that he had no great liking for pompous gatherings and scenes of splendid idleness. Of course he could not help being gratified by such gay spectacles as Kenilworth presented, and he was never loth to dance with the fair ladies or tilt with the fine gentlemen whom Elizabeth gathered about her. But at heart he preferred quiet and close personal intercourse with friends whom he could trust. "I would far rather have one pleasant chat with you, my dear Languet," we saw him writing from Venice in 1573, "than enjoy the magnificent magnificences of all these magnificoes."* So now he was glad enough to be a frequent visitor at Durham House.

And the inmates were glad enough to receive him. The Earl of Essex, well-nigh exasperated by the long series of indignities he had received, and full of scorn for the fair pretences through which he had seen too clearly to the rotten core, knew how to value rightly the strong good sense and the sturdy honesty of a youth like Sidney. He had made frequent trial of the father, and here there was all the father's manly spirit born again in the son, with a great addition of mental strength and beauty. On the other hand, Sidney knew how to appreciate such regard as was here given him. Essex was just the man for him to understand and like. In almost everything there was sympathy between them. To Philip it was a real grief that, while a great battle for liberty of

* *Correspondence*, p. 204.

thought and action was being waged upon the Continent, England took the ignoble part of looker-on; and the Earl often protested against the unworthy spirit prevalent with the Court, ready to sacrifice even religion for the sake of peace. Sidney had already learnt much from the stern Huguenot talk of Languet. Much more teaching, of the same sort, but imparted in a very different way, had now to come to him in the soldierly sentiments and courtly tones of Essex.

The Earl's daughter, Penelope, was thirteen years of age; and I suppose that her pretty, frolicsome ways were not distasteful to her father's guest. Half girl, half woman, she was just old enough to begin exercising pleasant tyranny, and liked well to be tyrannical. If as yet there was no love between her and Philip, there was at any rate strong liking. Her father with pleased eye watched its growth. He began to call Philip his son by adoption;* whereat, perhaps, the maiden looked angrily, yet in her heart was not displeased.

In the Earl of Leicester's mind, however, there was very real displeasure stirring. He could not complain if his nephew innocently loved the daughter, since already there were foul thoughts rising in his mind about her mother. But he did not like the young man's intimacy with his rival; still less did he like the friendly feeling displayed by Sir Henry Sidney. He had wished the Lord Deputy to write home in very vehement terms, requesting the return of Essex to Ireland. And the Lord Deputy had written, both publicly to the Queen's

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 168.

Council and privately to the Earl himself; but it was in language full of sympathy with him, and of hearty desire to do him service. Thereat, as we are told, the Earl of Leicester took occasion of misliking the despatch, and of showing somewhat of offence against his brother-in-law. This was in the middle of March, 1576. *

At last, after much delay and much stifling of ill-feeling on both sides, the Earl of Essex received appointment on the 9th of May. A grant of land was made to him, and he was to hold office as Earl-Marshal of Ireland. It was no very great recompense, but he seems to have been well pleased to leave London for work of any kind. He remained in England, however, more than two months. As if conscious of the doom that was before him, first he went down to Chartley, and made careful arrangements for the orderly preservation and disposal of his estates. He left Holyhead on the 22nd of July, and reached Dublin next day.

Sidney also went to Ireland, on visit to his father; † and there can be no question that he travelled in company with Essex. He was all equipped for his journey on the 21st of June, ‡ but did not leave till the following month. It is likely that he spent part of the interval in visiting Oxford, and the neighbouring town of Ewelme, where his old tutor, Mr. Richard Dorset, was residing, and giving instruction to

* Ibid., vol. i. p. 168.

† State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. lvi. Nos. 19, 20.

‡ *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 154.

Philip's younger brother, Robert.* One is amused at Languet's fears, expressed in a letter written in August, about the trouble and danger to which his friend exposed himself. Evidently the learned doctor of theology and the experienced statesman knew nothing about Ireland or its distance from England. "I greatly admire the filial affection which prompts you," he said; "but when I think of the rugged mountains of Wales, and the stormy Irish sea, and the unhealthy autumn season, I fall into a dreadful state of anxiety. Therefore, by the love which you once bore me, I implore you that, directly you get back to the protection and delights of your Court, you write to tell me of your safety, and rid me of the trouble which, as the old poet says, 'tortures me and rends my heart.' I daresay you will send us a full account of the marvels of Ireland, and a specimen of the birds which are said to grow upon trees there."†

If Sidney went with Essex, he must have waited some days in Dublin, and then, on the 10th of August, have gone out to meet his father at a place twenty-eight miles from the capital.‡ The party returned, that the Earl might be duly invested with his office.§ Almost immediately afterwards the Lord Deputy hurried to Galway, where a spirit of insurrection was spreading. Philip did not look for barnacle geese, but he saw many strange scenes of national degradation. Every-

* See a letter from Dorset to Sidney, printed by Zouch, p. 376.

† *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 155.

‡ *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 128.

§ Devereux, *The Earls of Essex*, vol. i. pp. 137, 138.

where small rebellions were springing up. Incendiaries were wandering about the country, planting evil thoughts among the people, and Sir Henry Sidney could do little more than follow on their heels, and execute the most blameworthy whom he could secure. It was a very miserable and a very hopeless state of things.

Yet there was a grotesque side to the picture. Here and there the Lord Deputy was visited by landlords and petty leaders who, in a jerk of friendliness to the English cause, or in dread of English retribution, tendered submission. "There came also to me," he wrote, "a most famous feminine sea-captain, called Grainore O'Mailey, and offered her services unto me, wheresoever I would command her, with three galleys and two hundred fighting men, either in Ireland or Scotland. She brought with her her husband, for she was, as well by sea as by land, more than master's mate to him."* That is saying much, for Grainore's husband was Sir Richard Mac David Bourke, surnamed "of the iron," because he was so constantly at war with his neighbours that he never put off his armour.† But the Amazon was still more famous; "the most notorious woman in all the coast of Ireland," says Sir Henry Sidney, who also tells us that his son Philip often spoke with her, and was much amused at her ways and words.

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clxi. No. 1.

† *Ulster Journal of Archæology*, vol. v. p. 322. See also vol. iv. p. 250, respecting a visit which this woman paid to England at a later period.

But Philip's amusement was soon checked. In Galway the news reached him that the Earl of Essex was grievously ill; and he "being most lovingly and earnestly wished and written for" by him, hastened to Dublin with all the speed he could make.

Essex had fallen ill almost directly after assuming his office of Earl-Marshal. The sickness had begun on the 21st of August, and it lasted thirty days. During all that time he endured dreadful pain, and observed the steady wasting away of his life with manly resignation. "The only care he had of any worldly matter," wrote one who watched him from first to last,* "was for his children, to whom often he commended his love and blessing, and yielded many times, even with great sighs, most devout prayers unto God, that He would bless them and give them His grace to fear Him. For his daughters also he prayed, lamenting the time, which is so vain and ungodly, as he said, considering the frailness of women, lest they should learn of the vile world." He talked much, also, of the state of England, saying he was very sorry for it; "For they lean all to policy and let religion go; but would to God they would lean to religion and let poli cy go!"

On the 20th of September he wrote a noble letter to his Queen. "My estate of life," he said, "which in my conscience cannot be prolonged until the sun rise again, hath made me dedicate myself only to God, and generally to forgive and ask forgiveness of the world, but

* Probably Waterhouse, the friend of both Essex and Sidney. The account is prefixed to Hearn's edition (1717) of Camden's *Annals*, vol. i.

most specially of all creatures to ask pardon of your Majesty for all offences that you have taken against me —not only for my last letters wherewith I hear your Majesty was much grieved, but also for all other actions of mine that have been offensively conceived by your Majesty. My hard estate, most gracious Sovereign, having by great attempts long ebbed, even almost to the low-water mark, made me hope much of the flood of your abundance ; which when I saw were not in mine own opinion more plentifully poured upon me, drove me to that which I dare not call plainness, but, as a matter offering offence, do condemn it for error ; yet pardonable, madam, because I justify not my doings, but humbly ask forgiveness, even at such a time as I can offend no more."* Next day he died, thirty-six years of age.

During that month of gnawing pain he had thought often of Philip Sidney, and had watched eagerly for his arrival. "Oh, that good gentleman!" he had exclaimed, on the nineteenth of September, two days before his death, and when he seems to have lost all hope about the young man's coming to him—"Oh that good gentleman! Have me commended unto him. And tell him I sent him nothing, but I wish him well —so well that, if God do move their hearts, I wish that he might match with my daughter. I call him son—he so wise, virtuous, and godly. If he go on in the course he hath begun, he will be as famous and worthy a gentleman as ever England bred."

* Murdin, *Burghley Papers* (1769), p. 300.

That message was told to Philip a few days later, as he stood weeping over the corpse of his friend. With all his hurrying, he had not been able to reach Dublin in time to see him alive. England had lost one of its most earnest and high-minded heroes, no whit less a hero because his chivalric temper and blunt generosity often led him into error and misfortune. Philip had lost one of his best and dearest friends.

Sir Henry Sidney, busy in Galway, did not hear the sad news for some time. "I left him," he wrote, "a lusty, strong, and pleasant man; but before I returned, his breath was out of his body, his body out of this country, and undoubtedly his soul in Heaven." *

The suddenness of the Earl's death, and the unnatural pains which he endured throughout his illness, inclined men to the suspicion that he had been poisoned. The Lord Deputy immediately instituted a careful inquiry as to the circumstances of the case, but without result. † No proof of poisoning could be found. Still less was there anything to point out a probable or possible poisoner. At a later date the Lord Deputy's own brother-in-law, the Earl of Leicester, was anonymously accused of the crime. The jealousy and hatred with which he had regarded his former rival, still more his unworthy passion for Lady Essex, gave colour to the charge. But we have not the smallest reasonable ground for admitting it.

Equally unfounded, as it seems, were the popular imputations upon the fair fame of the Countess of Essex.

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 141.

† Ibid., vol. i. p. 141.

She may not, in these last years, have had much love for her slighted husband, far too noble a man for her to appreciate ; and perhaps even before his death she may have had some evil affection for the Earl of Leicester. It is certain that she was married to that nobleman two years after becoming a widow ; and it is likely that at an earlier date she had been united to him by private rites. These were her offences ; we can charge her with none greater.

I have been led to speak of these affairs, and to dwell with some detail upon the death of Essex, because Sidney was intimately concerned therein. Had Essex lived, Philip would doubtless have become his son-in-law. As it was, the small connection he had had with him touched his whole career. Strongly attached to this Earl, he received from him an influence directly opposite to that which came from Leicester. The one nobleman, floating gaily upon the tide of royal favour, was anxious to guide his nephew in attempting a like perilous fortune. But the other had been shipwrecked because he was too honest to trim his sails and to steer his boat in the way appointed to all who would then attain courtly success, and his love for the young man led him eloquently and earnestly to show him the dangers of the undertaking, the certain ruin which must ensue either to his worldly fortunes or to his spiritual integrity. He would have him study to please and to obey the Queen, but it must be by upright ways, and with full regard to the far higher duties that he owed to his own conscience and to his Maker. Philip listened to the precept and watched the example of both Earls. He learnt much from

Leicester; but he learnt far more from Essex. The lesson was very solemnly taught in the death-bed scene we have been witnessing. It could never be forgotten as long as there was recollection of the noble message we have heard.

The remains of Essex were brought over to Wales and deposited, on the 29th of November, two months after his death, at Carmarthen, where he had held property. Long before this, Sidney had returned to the English Court. There the appearance of things had been considerably altered by the recent catastrophe. The new Earl, a pretty, clever lad just ten years old, was favourably regarded by the Queen. Leicester, having reasons of his own for wishing now to stand well with the family, and moved, it may be, by a genuine kindliness, gave to him and his kindred generous treatment. Moreover, he was taken under the special protection of Lord Burghley, in whose household, from the beginning of the new year, he resided. Every one wished well to the children. All old hates seemed to be dead, and a great deal of new friendship seemed to be awakened. Mr. Edward Waterhouse, a thriving favourite of both Essex and Sidney, wrote, on the 14th of November, to the Lord Deputy, saying, "I protest unto your Lordship, that I do not think that there is at this day so strong a man in England of friends as the little Earl of Essex, nor any man more lamented than his father since the death of King Edward."*

"And all these Lords that wish well to the children,"

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 147.

remarked Waterhouse, in the same letter, "and I suppose all the best sort of the English Lords besides, do expect what will become of the treaty between Mr. Philip and my Lady Penelope. Truly, my Lord, I must say to your Lordship, as I have said to my Lord of Leicester and Mr. Philip, the breaking off from their match, if the default be on your parts, will turn to more dishonour than can be repaired with any other marriage in England."*

That is all the information left to us concerning Sidney's occupation during the few weeks before and after the Christmas of 1576. We know, indeed, that he was thinking much about European politics, and we shall see presently the issue of his thoughts. But his chief home business, doubtless, was with Penelope Devereux. We may guess something of his state of mind and heart after reading a sonnet which he may have written at about this time :

"Since, shunning pain, I ease can never find,
Since bashful dread seeks where he knows me harmed,
Since will is won, and stopped ears are charmed,
Since force does faint, and sight doth make me blind,
Since, loosing long, the faster still I bind,
Since naked sense can conquer reason armed,
Since heart, in chilling fear, with ice is warmed,
In fine, since strife of thought but mars the mind—
I yield, O Love! unto thy loathed yoke;
Yet craving law of arms, whose rule doth teach
That, hardly used, whoever prison broke,
In justice quit, of honour made no breach;
Whereas, if I a grateful guardian have,
Thou art my lord, and I thy vowed slave."†

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* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 147.

† *Miscellaneous Works* (Oxford, 1829), p. 216.

CHAPTER V.

EMBASSAGE.

1577.

TWENTY months had not passed since Sidney's return from the Continent before he went thither on a second visit. This time, however, he quitted England not as a quiet student bearing passport for himself, three servants, and four horses, to make a tour for the purpose of learning languages and gaining school-boy knowledge, but as the Ambassador of Queen Elizabeth to the new Emperor of Germany, Rodolph the Second.

Maximilian, the former Emperor, had died on the 12th of October, 1576, at the age of fifty, and in the twelfth year of his reign. His death caused a serious change in the aspect of European politics. A wise monarch and an amiable man, he had nobly done his work in the very difficult position he had occupied. Bound by close traditionary ties to King Philip of Spain, he had quietly offered a steady resistance to Philip's wicked and ambitious plans. Although a Catholic, he had given open encouragement to the Protestant movement, had allowed the Huguenots to erect churches and conduct worship whenever and however they chose, and had admitted the wisest and

worthiest of them to offices of honour in the Empire. As far as he was able, he had given aid to the cause of liberty for which in the Netherlands men fought so zealously; and always, by his toleration of free thought and sanction of independent life, he had set a grand example. But with Rodolph's succession to the Empire, everything had been altered. Trained by a fanatical mother, and for some time educated in Spain and in Spanish policy by Philip, who designed him for his heir, his naturally noble mind had been corrupted by superstition and bigotry, and made the thrall of Jesuit influence. Among his first acts were the persecution of Protestants, the banishment of their leaders, and the forcing of orthodox catechisms upon their schools.

Nor was Maximilian's death the only disaster that at this time fell upon Germany. Two days after the event, Frederick the Third, the Elector Palatine, also died. He had stirred up some strife among his people by the forcible introduction of Calvinism, and his elder son Lewis was now causing fresh confusion by the compulsory establishment of Lutheran doctrines and the attempted extirpation of all Calvinist tenets, while John Casimir, the other son, was a sturdy champion of the proscribed creed. Therefore bigots of both sects, each receiving much encouragement, fought desperately for the mastery, and tolerant, charitable men hung down their heads and were heavy-hearted as to the issue of the conflicts.

English politicians were not heedless of these troubles, and we may well believe that they occupied much of Sidney's mind during the few winter months he

spent in London. Freshly returned from a long and close observation of the state of parties in Europe, and fully imbued with the principles of his friend Hubert Languet, he was entitled, and—it is likely—not at all unwilling, to express his opinions in public. We may imagine that he talked often about these things, and that in courtly circles he already won respect for his honest thoughts and apt expression of them. At any rate, Queen Elizabeth and her counsellers, Burghley and Leicester and Walsingham, thought him fit, though only twenty-two years old, to be entrusted with foreign work of a delicate nature. He was chosen to go to Vienna and Heidelberg with messages of condolence for the orphan Princes, and with assurances of the Queen's good-will towards them on their accession to power.*

The work, indeed, was delicate rather than important. Sidney hardly liked to undertake it, deeming, we learn, that it sorted better with his youth than with his spirit for him to go out to deliver a couple of formal letters and a few formal sentences of professed sympathy.† Before accepting the office, therefore, he asked that such instructions should be prepared as would give him scope, in passing through Germany, to confer with these and other Princes about the state of Europe as it affected the welfare of Protestantism and the progress of national liberty. In other words, he claimed the right of doing anything that seemed to him expedient for encouraging union among the various Reformed States and spurring

* Hollingshed, vol. iii. p. 1554.

† Fulke Greville, p. 48.

them on to more vigorous labour in the common cause of freedom.* This demand was acceded to, and on the 7th of February, 1577, a suitable code of directions was issued to him. †

Furnished with these, and with a private letter of introduction from the Earl of Leicester to Prince Casimir, ‡ Sidney set out on his mission upon one of the last few days in February. With him went his friend Fulke Greville and a number of other well-born and courtly gentlemen, partly as company to himself, partly as adding dignity to the embassage.§ The young Ambassador was very willing to make a show of his high office. Over the houses at which he lodged, during his journey, he caused to be fixed a large handsome tablet, setting forth his arms and ancestry, and announcing his business in the following terms : ‖

Illustrissimi et Generosissimi Viri
Philippi Sidnæi Angli
Pro-regis Hiberniæ filii, Comitum Warwici
Et Leicestriæ Nepotis, Serenissimæ
Reginæ Angliæ ad Cæsarem Legati.

Journeying thus pompously, and being met on the road by his friend Languet, Sidney proceeded to Heidelberg, the capital of the Palatinate. He reached the town about the 17th or 18th of March, but found that

* Fulke Greville, p. 49.

† British Museum, *Harl. MSS.*, No. 36, fols. 295—298 ; and *Lansdowne MSS.*, No. 155, fols. 187—190.

‡ Dated 22nd Feb., 1577. *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B xi. fol. 412.

§ *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 162.

‖ Collins, *Introduction to the Sidney Papers*, p. 100.

the Elector Lewis was absent. The most important part of his commission had, therefore, to be postponed: but he had interviews with John Casimir, to whom he presented his uncle Leicester's letter of introduction, besides some special messages from the Queen.

Casimir was the son whom the lately dead Elector had most dearly loved. Moreover, in England, whither he had probably come on a visit at some previous time, he was better known and liked than was his brother. Sidney, obeying his instructions, assured him of the especial love and friendly inclination which Elizabeth bore to him, as well on account of his own princely virtues and known affection for her, as for his father's sake.* "His answer," wrote the Ambassador in his despatch to Mr. Secretary Walsingham, "was that her Majesty indeed had great reason to be sorry for the loss of his father, having been in truth so true a friend and servant unto her: of his other good parts he left to be witnessed by the things he had done in the advancement of virtue and religion. For himself he could not think himself bound enough to her Majesty for this signification of her goodness towards him; and, of the virtues of his father there was none he would seek more to follow than his duty and goodwill to her Majesty. This he did in very good terms, and with a countenance well witnessing it came from his heart." †

After these compliments had passed, Sidney urged him to live in unity with his brother, a matter of very serious moment to the cause of Christianity. For, he

* *Harl. MSS.*, No. 36, fol. 295.

† *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B xi. fol. 387.

said, as they took opposite sides in the strife between Calvinists and Lutherans, unbrotherly contest between them would rouse great scandal all over Europe and be a real hindrance to the truth. Casimir acknowledged all this; but what, he asked, could he do? Lewis had already set up Lutheranism in the Upper Palatinate, which lay in Bavaria, and there was risk that he would soon effect a like change in the other part of the state. For himself he had made public profession of his adherence to his father's views; and if good and learned preachers of the pure doctrine were persecuted, what choice had he but to help and defend them? The Ambassador approved of this mind, and wrote home to say that he hoped well; for Lewis was naturally good-hearted, and only went to these extremes through a mistaken conscientiousness, which Casimir would be likely, by his wise and manly influence, to set right.*

There was much other discourse between Sidney and Casimir, during these few days. Sidney made careful inquiries as to what was the probable policy, in affairs both of state and of religion, of the Emperor Rodolph; how the Princes of Germany were affected in French and Low-Country concerns; what forces were preparing in the Palatinate; what the Count himself meant to do.† One matter is too characteristic to be passed by. It seems that the Queen of England had lent some money to the former Palatine, and it was a part of Sidney's commission to try and get it back again. But the Heidelberg exchequer was almost bankrupt.

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B xi. fol. 387.

† Ibid.

The King of France had failed to fulfil his engagement for the paying of some heavy sums; and as a consequence, neither Elizabeth nor even the soldiery led by their knights, could receive what was due. "I told him it would be a cause to make her Majesty withdraw from like loans, as the well paying would give her cause to do it in greater sums. He was grieved with my urging of him, and assured me that if he could get the payment, he would rather die than not see her Majesty honourably satisfied. Then I pressed him for certain jewels and hostages I had learned he had in pawn of the king. He told me they already belonged to the knights; but if her Majesty would buy any of them, she might have a good bargain." The business was not altogether in a satisfactory condition, but, Sidney added, "Truly, by what I find in the Prince, I do hold myself in good belief that her Majesty, within a year or two, shall be honourably answered it." *

Casimir was rather a hot-headed, weak-minded youth, with no lack of good intentions, but not much ability to carry them rightly to their end. However, he had many good parts; and these Sidney appreciated. The diplomatic visit caused a solid friendship to be formed between the two.

On the 23rd of March, the Ambassador and his suite passed out of Heidelberg and proceeded to Amberg, whither the Elector Lewis had gone and where he was thought to be still lodging. But he had left that town before their arrival; so Sidney, resolving that at pre-

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B xi. fol. 387.

sent he would not seek him anywhere else, went on to Prague, then the residence of the Emperor and his family.*

Exactly two years before, Philip had quitted the city on his return to England. He had come there in company with Languet to be present at Maximilian's opening of the Bohemian Diet. On that occasion the Emperor had granted to the Bohemians full freedom in religious matters, and promised that he and his successor would protect them in the same. It was true, he had said, that his sons were attached to the religion men called Catholic, but he had so taught them to love truth and honesty wherever it appeared, that holders of a different creed should have no reason for fearing them.† The good man neither thought how soon his eldest son should have to succeed him, nor rightly estimated the effect of his own teaching as compared with the secret influence of the Jesuits. But everything looked pleasant then, and the members of the Diet, in return for the great favours done to them, gladly elected Rodolph King of Bohemia.

Now that Maximilian was dead, and that Rodolph was Emperor of Germany, affairs were greatly altered. The Bohemians were too sturdy in the principles of religious freedom they inherited from Huss and Jerome to admit so much change as elsewhere Rodolph was effecting; but even they had heavy grounds for fear, when they observed the austere bearing of the Emperor, the favour in which he held the crowds of priests who

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B xi. fol. 363.

† *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 133, 134.

surrounded him, and the policy he steadily pursued. The skies looked black enough after the sunshine they had been enjoying.

So it was when Sidney entered Prague on this new visit. He arrived on Maundy Thursday,* and witnessed, it may be, the solemn services which were performed upon Good Friday, and the less mournful ceremonies of Easter Sunday. On Easter Monday he had his first audience with the Emperor and, after presenting his letters, he made suitable discourse.

He began by assuring Rodolph of the great grief felt by his mistress and all England at the loss of so worthy a Prince as the late Emperor had been. It was a loss, he said, which Europe could ill endure, for Maximilian had not blessed Germany alone, by holding its regions in good peace with one another, and by staying from invasion that great enemy of Christendom, the Turk. He had given to the world help most necessary in this present time, when such weakness was produced by the divisions of those who bore the name and title of Christian Princes, and had made great proof of his singular foresight and wisdom. It was a loss, moreover, which fell more heavily upon the Queen of England than upon any other, seeing that she had ever placed in him the firm trust of personal friendship, and had ever received great honour at his hands. †

The expression of grief for the dead was followed by assurances of goodwill towards the living. The Ambas-

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B xi. fol. 363.

† Ibid. *Harl. MSS.*, No. 36, fol. 296.

sador went on to say that the Queen had sent him to ask that she might be closely linked in friendship with the son of such a father. She had good hope of him that he would imitate his father in his private virtues and in the manner of his government. There, surely, he had a pattern worthy of imitation. In the name of the Queen—so Sidney proceeded in his address—he besought him to do rightly the work upon which he was just entering. He had been suddenly called to be the chief Potentate in Europe: upon the direction of his government depended the well-doing or the ruin of Christendom: oh! that he would resolve to follow in the steps of the noble Emperor who was gone! The speaker besought him with honest purpose to embrace peace both at home and abroad. He urged him, if he valued his own welfare or the progress of the Empire, to give no ear to such violent counsel as some martial and turbulent courtiers are apt to offer to young princes—men who rather foster their ambitious and private passions than warn them that, of all idle wars, the issues are uncertain, the benefits none, and the harms manifest. For wars, at best, are full of danger, and to be used for remedying national maladies;—just as, in procuring the health of a diseased body, cutting and searing are employed—only in cases of great peril and of great necessity.*

In speaking thus far, Sidney had done little more than repeat and expand the words of his instructions. But the subject seemed to grow more important in his

* *Harl. MSS.*, No. 36, p. 296.

eyes as he proceeded. He saw that at that moment evil counsels were working, bad influences were gaining power. He implored the Emperor and his ministers to rouse themselves, and, looking around, to see what dangers were threatening them and becoming greater every hour. And whence came they? whence, save from that fatal conjunction of Rome's undermining superstitions with the commanding forces of Spain?

At those bold words the haughty Emperor and his frigid courtiers, trained in all the hard coldness of Spanish formalities, were startled into unwonted show of interest; wonder being so great, that there was little place for wrath. Sidney saw his advantage, and pursued the theme. This, he declared, was no time for listless faith. Neither its inland situation, nor its vast multitude, nor its combined strength, nor its wealth, could rescue the great German commonwealth from its threatened dangers. Such things might have served for protection before, but they were not strong enough now; for there was formed against it a more baneful league than had ever yet been known. The new leaguers made not open war by proclamation, they fought craftily;—what, indeed, but craft could be expected in a strife where Rome was actor? Their plan was to begin and half gain the battle by the invisible conquering of souls. What else was the meaning of all these newly-fashioned ways of filling men's minds with pretences of holiness—these specious rites—these honourings of saints—these fabrications of miracles—these institutions of new orders and reformations of old ones—these dispensations given to Papists, and cursings

and thunderbolts of excommunication heaped upon heretics? By such agencies they aimed to get possession of the weak, to discourage the strong, to divide the doubtful, and to lull all inferior powers to sleep—just as, by calling them allies, the ancient Romans were wont to become the lords of foreign nations. And when this Romish part of the victory was done, then would follow the Spanish half of the conquest, less spiritual but more forcible. By making shrewd confederacies, by stirring up factions, by briberies, by false treaties, by commercial leagues, by marriage alliances, by changes of friendship, by open war, and by all other acts of advantageous power, the triumph over all Germanic liberty would be secured.

Was it not so? Had not those two nations, Rome and Spain, united in a brotherhood of evil, already shed so much blood that they were justly become the terror of all governments? Even now there was but one way of withstanding this great power. It could be balanced by no other means than the formation of a general league in religion. This was the only safety,—Sidney reiterated in conclusion;—but here there was real safety. "To associate by an uniform bond of conscience for the protection of religion and liberty, will prove a more solid union and will symbolize far better against their tyrannies, than any factious combination in policy, any league of state or other traffic of civil or martial humours possibly can do." *

There the Ambassador ended his speech. The

* Fulke Greville, pp. 49—52.

Emperor Rodolph was not convinced by it. Speaking in Latin, he tendered his thanks to Elizabeth for her sympathy and goodwill. As to the policy he should adopt in the present troublous times, he spoke haughtily. God, he said, who was the protector of the Empire, would provide him with fit counsel for its government, and would help him worthily to imitate his father's wise example. Then he wandered off into a discussion of general affairs, avoiding the special matters upon which Sidney sought to be informed; and so ended the conference. Judging from this day's experience and from other observations, Sidney concluded that Rodolph was a treacherous, Jesuit-bound and "extremely Spaniolated" man, of few words and sullen disposition, with none of his father's winning behaviour towards strangers, yet with a certain power by which he kept men constant to him.*

"The next day," wrote the Ambassador in his despatch, "I delivered her Majesty's letters to the Empress, with the singular signification of her Majesty's great goodwill unto her, and her Majesty's wishing of her to advise her son to a wise and peaceable government. Of the Emperor deceased I used but few words, because in truth I saw it bred some trouble unto her to hear him mentioned in that kind. She answered me with many courteous speeches and great acknowledging of her own beholdingness to her Majesty. And for her son, she said she hoped he would do well; but that, for her own part, she had given herself from the world, and would not greatly stir from thenceforward in it.

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B. xi. fol. 363.

Then did I deliver to the Queen of France her letter, she standing by the Empress; using such speeches as I thought were fit for her double sorrow and her Majesty's goodwill unto her, confirmed by her wise and noble governing of herself in the time of her being in France." This lady was Elizabeth, daughter of Maximilian and widow of that Charles the Ninth who had died wretchedly three years ago, tormented by delirious recollections of the Saint Bartholomew massacre. His gentle wife had done all she could to promote peace between the opposite parties in France, whereby, if no other good was done, she had earned the respect of all right-minded thinkers on both sides. She was now living in retirement with her mother, until joining the sisterhood of Saint Anne. "Her answer was full of humbleness, but she spake so low that I could not understand many of her words." *

The few remaining days of his residence with the Imperial Court were mainly spent by Sidney in careful noting of the persons and parties around him. Moreover, he had old friends of his own to converse with; and especially there was Languet with him, very pleased to see his darling Philip again, and very proud of the high station which he was filling.

The Ambassador quitted Prague near the end of April, after taking part in some further interviews and farewell speeches. As a memento of his visit, he bore away a splendid gold chain, the present of the Emperor Rodolph.†

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B. xi. fol. 363.

† *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 193.

On the last day of the month the lordly company reached Heidelberg, whither the Elector Lewis had ere now returned; and Sidney lost no time in performing that part of his commission which had been deferred. On the 1st of May he had audience. To Lewis he repeated Queen Elizabeth's messages of condolence and persuasions to unity between him and his brother. Lewis made a very long speech, full of proper thanks to her Majesty and loud praises of his worthy father. He also professed himself grateful for the recommendation to concord, and talked much of common-place about the necessity of brotherly love, but said nothing at all concerning his own purposes or his opinion of Casimir. "One thing," said Sidney, "I was bold to add in my speech, to desire him, in her Majesty's name, to have merciful consideration of the Church of the Religion so notably established by his father, as in all Germany there is not such a number of excellent men; and truly any man would rue to see the desolation of them. I laid before him, as well as I could, the dangers of the mightiest Princes of Christendom, by entering into like violent changes, the wrong he should do his worthy father utterly to abolish that he had instituted, and so, as it were, to condemn him, besides the example he should give his posterity to handle him the like. This I emboldened myself to do, seeing, as methought, great cause for it—either to move him at least to have some regard for her Majesty's sake, or, if that followed not, yet to leave that public testimony with the Church of Germany, that her Majesty was careful of them—besides that I learned Prince Casimir had used her

Majesty's authority in persuading his brother from it." To all this Lewis was willing to listen, although at first he made no answer at all, and afterwards just replied vaguely that he had no personal misliking of the great Calvinist doctors and their followers, and that he would gladly do much for the Queen's sake, yet that he could not help acting like the other Princes of the Empire.* That was all Sidney could gather from the Elector, and he was by no means satisfied with that.

On the whole, he found very little to cheer him in this embassage. The Protestant League, which his whole heart was set upon forming, and towards establishing which he had asked for special authority to be inserted in his instructions, found favour with none of the Princes of Germany, save Prince Casimir, the Landgrave, and the Duke of Brunswick; and they were disposed to enter upon it rather out of compliment to Queen Elizabeth, than for a stronger reason. The Protestant potentates, Sidney mournfully declared, had no care but how to grow rich and to please their senses. The Elector of Saxony, forgetful of his duty to make common cause on behalf of the Reformed Religion, was wrapping himself up in Calvinism, and growing bitter against the true Lutherans. The others were of the same mind, thinking only how they could be safe, though all the world were on fire around them.†

This was a very wretched state of things. It showed the degeneracy into which Protestantism had already

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B. xi. fol. 364.
† Ibid., fol. 388.

fallen. Here was Europe beaten under a great storm, gathered from all quarters. Spain and Rome were leagued in a fierce crusade, the purpose of which was no less than the utter overthrow of all liberty, both civil and religious. The Turks were watching their time, and, as soon as fitting opportunity occurred, Sidney thought they would use their strength and make the Christian states the slaves of a tyranny only less bad than that of Spain. And the Reformers, except here and there a few, were wasting all their energies, and giving the lie to all their professions of large Christian charity, in foolish bickerings about the tenets of Luther and Calvin, in paltry quarrels about rituals and confessions of faith, and, worse than all, in party strife and personal jealousies. Even the Bohemians, who in Maximilian's time had been so earnest to have churches of the Reformed Religion granted to them, were now becoming cold-hearted, and seemed contented with the thraldom which was fastening upon them. Of only a very few men, such as Prince Casimir and William, Landgrave of Hesse, could Sidney speak at all cheerfully.* "Every day," he wrote, "my hope grows less and less." †

In this mood he went, on the 4th of May, to confer with Casimir, who was then lodging at Kaiserslautern; and thence he passed quickly to the residence of the Landgrave William;‡ but of neither interview is any record left. In all these journeys Hubert Languet

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B. xi. fol. 388.

† Ibid., fol. 364.

‡ Ibid., fol. 364.

appears to have been his companion. They were together in Cologne about the middle of May, and there they parted. "I received incredible delight from, our intercourse during so many days," wrote the old man, a month later; "but I feel now just as they do who gladly drink too much water when they are hot and get a fever in consequence. My great pleasure brought about a greater sorrow than I ever before endured; and it has far from left me now." *

From Cologne Sidney was very anxious to go into Flanders on a private visit to William, Prince of Orange. But Languet objected. He besought Philip to be very careful how he gave to evil-wishers the smallest chance of speaking ill of him; saying that thus far he had fulfilled the Queen's commission in a manner worthy of the highest approbation and reward: it would

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 163. During the days spent at Cologne, some important business was discussed between Languet and Sidney, and it was often referred to in their subsequent correspondence; but the allusions are so guarded, and there are so many missing letters, that the matter is wholly wrapped up in mystery. All we know is that Languet, on behalf of some mutual friends, made an important proposal to Sidney which he liked well, both on its own account and as a token of their high opinion of him; but he replied that he could determine nothing without first consulting his kindred and the Queen, from both of whom he expected great opposition. (*Epistolæ*, pp. 164, 165, 171, &c.) It is possible that this may have been a scheme for Sidney's marriage to some noble lady of Germany; and we know what a zealous matchmaker the Huguenot bachelor was. It is more probable that the project had a political meaning; perhaps that Philip should reside on the continent and entirely devote himself, as statesman, or as soldier, or as both, to the great battle then being waged for every sort of freedom. But there are reasons against this supposition, as well as against every other that can be made. The matter, however, whatever it may have been, seems to have issued in nothing.

not do for him now to incur the least risk of her displeasure. Sidney did not take the advice very kindly. He had often blamed Languet for hindering him from going to Rome; he now repeated his reproaches, and charged his friend with always checking him in his desires to gain acquaintance with great persons and great places. Both men were very pleased when an unexpected letter arrived from Queen Elizabeth, bidding her Ambassador come home by way of Flanders, where he was to present her Majesty's congratulations to the Prince upon the birth of his son.*

By this commission Sidney was enabled, not only to see the great champion of liberty in the Netherlands, but also to meet William's famous antagonist, Don John of Austria. When or where the meeting took place is not stated; but it probably occurred in Brussels towards the end of May. On the first of the month Don John had made a splendid entrance into that city, as newly appointed Governor General of the Provinces on behalf of his Majesty, King Philip of Spain. It was a spectacle in keeping with the haughty and ambitious, but withal chivalrous and half generous, character of the Prince. He, the hero of Lepanto, had come to the Netherlands with all possible show of dignity and strength, resolved to spare no effort in crushing the long rebellious people. Moreover, it was currently reported, if not everywhere believed, that Don John had another and a more personal object in view. Just thirty-two years old, he thought he might be no unfit husband for the captive Queen of Scotland, who was

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 160, 161.

now thirty-five. He was waiting for a suitable opportunity of secretly or openly rescuing Mary from her confinement, and that done, he fancied, or his ardent friends and timid enemies fancied for him, that it would be easy to re-establish her dominion in Scotland; why not let her be Queen of England also, and have a King John the Second? It was a foolish, impracticable project, but it sorted well with the bold, reckless spirit of a man who had all his life long been a successful adventurer, and for whom there was some excuse if his head was turned by the marvellous things he had already done.

But whatever thoughts were working silently, there was as yet no public rupture. Elizabeth still sent ambassadors, and Don John received them, with mutual interchange of high compliment and professions of lasting friendship. And Sidney, finding himself in the same town with the Prince, was glad enough to come, not as an Ambassador but as a private person, and kiss his hand. At first, we learn, Don John, in his Spanish haughtiness, spoke condescendingly to him as to a youth, his language being courteous, as became one addressing a stranger, but no more. "Yet after a while," we are told, "that he had taken his just altitude, he found himself so stricken with this extraordinary planet that the beholders wondered to see what ingenious tribute that brave and high-minded Prince paid to his worth, giving more honour and respect to this hopeful young gentleman than to the Ambassadors of mighty Princes." *

* Fulke Greville, p. 37.

Whatever the worth of this interview, Sidney appears not to have cared much for it. There was far greater pleasure for him in his visit to the Prince of Orange at Ghent or Bruges, or whatever town of Flanders he then dwelt in. William was now forty-four years old, and, although harassed by the petty jealousies of many both in and out of the Netherlands, was the recognised leader of the Protestant party. Nowhere is there a better portrait of him than that contained in three clumsy sentences, written by the same companion who has just told us about Don John. They refer to an interview had two years later than the occasion of Sidney's visit. "His uppermost garment," wrote Fulke Greville, "was a gown, yet such as, I dare confidently affirm, a mean born student in our Inns of Court would not have been well pleased to walk the streets in. Unbuttoned his doublet was, and of like precious matter and form to the other: his waistcoat, which showed itself under, not unlike the best sort of those woollen knit ones which our ordinary boatmen row us in: his company about him, the burgesses of that beer-brewing town;* and he, so fellow-like encompassed with them, as, had I not known his face, no exterior sign of degree or deservedness could have discovered the inequality of his work or estate from that multitude. Notwithstanding, I no sooner came to his presence, but it pleased him to take knowledge of me; and even upon that, as if it had been a signal to make a change, his respect of a stranger instantly begat respect to himself in all about him; an

* Delft, where William then was.

outward passage of inward greatness which, in a popular estate, I thought worth the observing, because there is no pedigree but worth could possibly make a man prince and no prince in a moment, at his own pleasure." *

William's blunt, manly disposition was altogether to Sidney's liking. He promptly formed for him a strong attachment, which we know to have been heartily reciprocated. Very different from the Prince, but perhaps quite as attractive to the Ambassador, was the young Princess of Orange, described as a woman of beauty, intelligence and virtue. She was the Princess Charlotte of Bourbon, daughter of the Duke of Montpensier, well known as a fierce hater of Huguenots. Forced to live as nun and afterwards abbess of the convent of Jouärrs, the circumstances of her life only quickened her former affection for Protestant principles. The conclusive argument against Romanism came in the Saint Bartholomew massacre. In the autumn of 1572 she fled to Heidelberg. There, altogether cast off by her father, and under the protection of the Elector Frederic, she spent three years. There Prince William met and learnt to love her. On the 12th of June, 1575, having obtained proper divorce from the poor, mad woman who had been his first wife, and who was now lodged in a suitable asylum, he took her in marriage. All the Protestant Princes of Germany, and none more fiercely than John of Nassau, William's brother, protested against this union as unholy and im-

* Fulke Greville, pp. 23—25.

politic. William, without wasting any words, quickly asserted that this was a matter on which he chose to judge for himself, and to be guided by his own conscience. In the end, every one acknowledged the wisdom of his conduct and became endeared to the noble-minded woman whom he had made his wife.*

It was their first-born child concerning whom Sidney went to offer congratulatory messages to the parents, and at whose christening, as it seems, he was godfather. † We have no details of the visit, save the statement that the Princess of Orange, in token of her esteem for him, presented him with a fair jewel. ‡ His stay must have been short, for he reached Flanders at the end of May, and he was in London again by the 8th or 9th of June. He and all his suite returned in perfect health, except Fulke Greville, who had violent sea-sickness on the way home, and had consequently to lie by at Rochester. §

Sidney had been absent altogether about three months and a half. On the 9th of June, Mr. Secretary Walsingham, writing from the Court of Greenwich to the Lord Deputy, thus ended his letter :—"I am to impart unto you the return of the young gentleman, Mr. Sidney and your son, whose message, very sufficiently performed, and the relating thereof, is no less gratefully received and well liked of her Majesty, than the honourable opinion he hath left behind, with all the Princes

* Motley, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, vol. iii. pp. 21, 22, etc.
† *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 192.
‡ Ibid., p. 193.
§ Ibid., p. 193.

with whom he had to negociate, hath left a most sweet savour and grateful remembrance of his name in those parts. The gentleman hath given no small arguments of great hope, the fruits whereof I doubt not but your Lordship shall reap, as the benefit of the good parts that are in him, and whereof he hath given some taste in this voyage, is to redound to more than your Lordship and himself. There hath not been any gentleman, I am sure, these many years ,that hath gone through so honourable a charge with as great commendations as he: in consideration whereof, I could not but communicate this part of my joy with your Lordship, being no less a refreshing unto me in these my troublesome businesses than the soil is to the chafed stag. And so, wishing the increase of his good parts to your Lordship's comfort and the service of her Majesty and his country, I humbly take my leave." *

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 193.

CHAPTER VI.

HOME JOYS AND HOME TROUBLES.

1577.

With his return from Germany began a new stage in Sidney's life. Before quitting England, he had mixed much with the Court, had taken high place in the estimation of Queen Elizabeth, had gained the admiration of many and the friendship of a few. But at that time he was very young, and there was a drawback to his courtly success in the intimacy existing between him and the disgraced Earl of Essex. Now, however, he was at once admitted into the inner circle of royal favour. On the mission which he had just completed, experienced diplomatists agreed that he had acted very wisely. To his natural refinement and sound education, had been added a wide acquaintance with the great men and the diverse institutions of foreign nations. Moreover he had come back to find himself placed, by a new family tie, in closer relation to the aristocracy of the land than he had hitherto been able to claim. Not only was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, his uncle; Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, was now his brother-in-law.

The Earl, who was a nephew of Queen Catherine Parr, had lived an upright, and on the whole a very

quiet life of about forty years. Not long a widower,* he was in 1577 attracted by the grace and comeliness of a damsel then about twenty years old, and his choice showed wisdom. If he must have a third wife, he could have found none else at all to be compared with Mary Sidney. Other ladies of the Elizabethan Court far excelled her in splendour, perhaps also in beauty; but no one was a truer woman. And doubtless she, all things being considered, could hardly have met with a fitter husband. The Earl was old enough to be a prudent guardian to her, although not too old to be really loved. If he was not very clever or very profound, he was, at least, able to appreciate his wife's goodness and to honour her as she deserved to be honoured.

On other grounds the match was a good one. The Earl of Leicester liked it, not for any sentimental reason, but because his niece was poor and her lover rich; because it was part of his policy to ally himself and his kindred with as many great families as possible, and thereby to add to his own influence. Nine years ago

* In 1553 he had been pledged in marriage to Catherine, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk, both husband and wife being mere children: but the union had never been completed and, it being found that the lady had secretly espoused herself to the Earl of Hertford, a divorce had been procured. His next and first real wife was another Catherine, daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury, and an especial favourite of the Queen's. Twice during her last illness, in 1575, Elizabeth went to watch by her bedside at Castle Baynard. "The last time," wrote Lady Anne Talbot, the sister of the dying Countess, "it was ten of the clock at night, or ever her Majesty went hence, being so great a mist as there were divers of the barges and boats that waited for her lost their ways and landed in wrong places, but, thanks be to God, her Majesty came well home, without cold or fears."—Nichols, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, vol. i. p. 416.

he had planned zealously for the marriage of his nephew, Philip, with Sir William Cecil's daughter; now he was eager to unite Mary with the lord of Wilton. Sir Henry Sidney also approved of the scheme. To his brother-in-law he wrote:

"I find to my exceeding great comfort, the likelihood of a marriage between my Lord of Pembroke and my daughter; which great honour to me, my mean lineage and kin, I attribute to my match in your noble house; for which I acknowledge myself bound to honour and serve the same to the uttermost of my power: yea, so joyfully have I at heart that my dear child hath so happy an advancement as this is, as, in troth, I would lie a year in close prison rather than it should break. But, alas! my dearest lord, mine ability answereth not my hearty desire. I am poor: mine estate is not unknown to your lordship, which wanteth much to make me able to equal that which I know my Lord of Pembroke may have. Two thousand pounds, I confess, I have bequeathed her, which your lordship knoweth I might better spare her when I were dead than one thousand living; and in troth, my lord, I have it not, but borrow it I must, and so I will. And if your lordship will get me leave that I may feast my eyes with that joyful sight of their coupling, I will give her a cup worth five hundred pounds. Good my lord, bear with my poverty; for if I had it, little would I regard any sum of money, but willingly would give it, protesting before the Almighty God that if He and all the powers on earth would give me my choice of a husband for her, I would choose the Earl of Pembroke. I write to my Lord of Pembroke, which herewith I send to your lordship; and thus I end, in answering your most welcome and honourable letter, with my hearty prayer to Almighty God to perfect your lordship's good work, and requite you for the same; for I am not able." *

No leave was given to Sir Henry Sidney to be present at the wedding, but it took place on some day between the 4th of February, 1577, when the Lord Deputy wrote, as we have seen, and the end of May,

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 88.

when Leicester went to tender his compliments to the new Countess of Pembroke.*

Ere long he was followed by his nephew. Philip, having reached England about the 8th of June, spent the rest of that month and some part of July in attendance upon the Court, first at Greenwich and afterwards at Richmond and elsewhere. As soon as he could be spared, he seems to have hurried off, intending to visit his father in Ireland. † First, however, he went for a few weeks to Wilton. ‡ That holiday must have been in many ways a happy one. All life long there was notable love between Philip and Mary, but there was special ground for fond and cheerful talk in the great things which had happened to both brother and sister during the half year for which they had been separated. Philip, from being thought an untried stripling, had suddenly taken his stand, in the world's judgment, as an ambassador and a statesman ; and Mary, whom he had left a modest maiden in her teens, was now a woman, and the wife of one of the highest and richest peers in England.

But Philip's stay at Wilton was short. The business for which he had designed to go to Ireland, taking a fresh turn, suddenly called him back to Court. Over his father's concerns a cloud was gathering ; it had been gathering for some months, and now seemed ready to burst. On two accounts the Queen was angry with Sir Henry Sidney. He had pricked her in

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 182.
† Ibid., p. 199.
‡ Ibid., pp. 203, 209, 211.

two sensitive parts of her character, avarice and vanity.

As to the first point, it seems that the Irish expenses had been unusually heavy of late. Affairs were in a very critical condition. Between the constant tendency to rebellion, now especially to be dreaded, and the imminent risk of foreign invasion, the Lord Deputy found it extremely hard and perilous work so to fit matters as to maintain order and promote justice. He had to enrol a few hundred more men in the militia, to see that the forts were in good order, and to adopt other defensive measures. To us it is strange that he should have effected so much at so little additional cost. But in Elizabeth's opinion it was fault enough to be spending money at all. "That Henry Sidney," on one occasion she exclaimed petulantly, "doth always seek to put us to charge." Yet on these points the arguments of the Earl of Leicester,—never so careful in his friendship, we are told, as now,—seconded by the acquiescence of the prudent Lord Treasurer Burghley, would perhaps have been successful if there had not been another and a greater cause of offence.

This second grievance was of very old date. In 1567, when Sir Henry Sidney made his celebrated journey through the south-western part of Ireland, he had found its disorders growing worse at every step, and this chiefly because of the misgovernment countenanced by the Earl of Ormond, "in whom," he said, "there appeared manifestly to want both justice, judgment, and stoutness to execute." There was evidently no malice in this condemnation, for during the same tour,

the Lord Deputy, when called upon to settle a strife between the Earls of Ormond and Desmond, passed judgment in favour of the former. But though willing to deal kindly towards the Irish lord for the little good that was in him, Sir Henry was in most matters forced to condemn him severely on account of his arrogant bearing to the English and his cruel treatment of the natives.

Such even-handed justice was not satisfactory to the Queen. Ormond was her kinsman, and he had long been in attendance at the English Court. He was a handsome and well-spoken man. Therefore he must be treated very favourably. He must not be called upon for such taxes as were claimed of the other Irish nobles. He must not undergo punishment for his evil deeds like that awarded to the rest. Those, in effect, were the directions transmitted to the Lord Deputy. He, not liking them, had long ago requested that he might have nothing to do with so dangerous a subject. "For however indifferently I shall deal," he wrote to Cecil as early as 1566, "I know it will be thought not favourable enough on my Lord of Ormond's side, and I assure you, Sir, if I served under the cruellest tyrant that ever tyrannized, and knew him affected on the one or the other side in a matter between party and party referred to my judgment, I would rather offend his affection and stand to his misericord, than offend mine own conscience or stand to God's judgment." In another letter to Cecil, written two years later, Sidney gave fresh proof of the man's profligate wickedness. "For the honour of good charity," he said, "for knight-

hood's sake, be good to the widow and infant, and move the Queen either to charge Ormond or us to see it amended."

In this way things went on for years. One of the reports by which it was sought to weaken the Lord Deputy's power, both with the English Court and with the Irish people, was to the effect that he and his brother-in-law, the Earl of Leicester, were plotting, the one to marry the Queen and become King of England, and the other to construct Ireland into a solid monarchy, he of course being monarch! There were none in England to believe such a story; whereas Ormond and his brother Sir Edmund Butler gave a notable illustration of their evil mind in the rebellion of 1569, which, because connived at by the former and openly led by the latter, was known as the Butlers' War. But nothing could persuade the Queen to abandon her unworthy favourite. She only scolded Sidney for not executing plans, which were very unworthy of her queenly position and very ruinous to the welfare of her Irish territory. And now, in the year 1577, the scolding was at its height. The Lord Deputy, seeing fresh reason for being indignant with Ormond, had given fresh offence by his sturdy policy. In January he wrote to Walsingham to say that all show of friendship was now breaking between him and the Earl. Next month, in a letter to Leicester, he observed, "I crave nothing at his hand but that which he oweth to the Queen, and that which her great liberality, beside natural duty, bindeth him to. And if he will have of me that I owe him not, as he hath had, he cannot win it by crossing me, as I hear

he doth in the Court, and I have cause to deem he doth in this country."

The Queen was ready enough to give ear to her favourite's complaints. On the 9th of August, while Philip was at Wilton, she caused a very severe letter to be written to his father, condemning him for laying upon Ormond the imposts from which she had ordered that he should be exempted, and commanding that a prompt apology should be made both for this offence and for the extravagance now being shown in Ireland.

Sir Henry Sidney defended himself in a very noble letter, written on the 15th of September. He showed that, if the country was to be governed at all, it could not possibly be done at less cost. He said boldly that, if great men like Ormond were not taxed, he could not and would not levy money from the poor. "For in equity that cannot be imposed upon them which his lands should bear; for therein were oppression and no equality in distribution, so that your Majesty only is to bear the loss." How then was he to act? How could power be at all maintained in Ireland if he was neither to draw taxes from the wealthy natives nor to claim money from the English Exchequer? It must come from some source; whence could it come? The Lord Deputy was justly angry with his Sovereign, and he did not scruple to send her retort in stronger language, and with infinitely stronger arguments, than she had used to him. He told her plainly that, on the one hand, the effect of her conduct was to make the people more wilful and obstinate than they otherwise would be: "And, on the other side, the slender backing of me in

your services discourageth me altogether either to attempt or do anything with comfort or conceit of good liking. For bruits fly hither that I shall be revoked and that your Majesty hath conceived a displeasure against me,—and you know what service is to be expected, and how the people will be inclined, when they shall suspect that I am in disgrace with you. And, Madam, these bruits do no good. If they be true, if it be determined I shall be revoked, I humbly beseech your Majesty I may know your gracious pleasure: if it be not so, it were good in the respect of the advancement of your service that these bruits be suppressed. But when I look into the services that I have done, the care and travail that I have taken, and the sound conscience I bear that I have served you faithfully, truly, and profitably, I cannot but lament, with sorrow of heart and grief of mind, to receive such sharp and bitter letters from your Majesty, which so much have perplexed me, both body and mind, since I received them." *

This was the state of the case then when Philip Sidney hurried up from his pleasant holiday at Wilton to be present with the Court. In August he had sent forward Waterhouse, Sir Henry's experienced agent, saying that, considering what daily alterations were wont to take place in the sentiments and policy of the Crown, he could advise him nothing, and bidding him

* My information respecting this Irish episode is drawn from various letters written by, to, and about Sir Henry Sidney, and to be found partly as MSS. in the State Paper Office, and partly in print among the *Sidney Papers*.

do whatever seemed most wise and accordant with the circumstances of the hour. *

Waterhouse behaved very discreetly. On one occasion when urging his master's claims to the Queen, he was interrupted by the Earl of Thomond, another Irish nobleman, one of like mind with Ormond, who said that, whereas the Lord Deputy was spending so much money about the protection of Ireland, he would engage to put the country in a better state of defence, and in a way which, instead of costing anything, would bring in a little revenue to the crown. This was a remark of the sort most likely to delight the Queen; but Waterhouse checked the mischief which it might have done, by quietly asking to have the scheme explained in detail. The Earl said he would gladly do so, yet, as the details were very complicated, he must take a day or two to work them into a shape fit to set before her Majesty. Of course they were never presented.†

But though the agent did his best, Philip was not satisfied to leave the matter solely in his hands. He therefore, early in September, presented himself at the Court then assembled at Oatlands.‡ He was received very graciously; and, for all the tokens of kind feeling shown towards him by his own and his father's friends at this difficult crisis, he made courteous return. Others who were not friends offered him respect, or the pretence for it. Among the latter, the Earl of Ormond one day essayed to talk with him. We can fancy the

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i., pp. 209, 210.
† Ibid., p. 211.
‡ Ibid., p. 225.

patronizing look and the big words which the petted Irishman, the traducer of Sir Henry Sidney, would flourish. Philip, we are told, eyed him haughtily and made no answer. It was a bold thing to do in the royal presence, and to the reigning favourite of the hour. The spectators thought that bloodshed would surely follow. But the Earl, too prudent to take offence, said in a pompous way that he would accept no quarrels from a virtuous young gentleman, who was bound by nature to defend his father's cause; and Philip on the other hand, said Waterhouse, in a letter, went as far and showed as much magnanimity as was convenient.* So the affair ended.

Philip indeed had no time for any private quarrel. He made it his one business to justify his father. He saw how and why the Queen was offended, he knew that there was no good cause of offence, and he set himself to the work of putting matters in their true light. To this end, not content with mere talking and vague apologies, he prepared a written defence, in which he carefully gathered up all the complaints that were floating about concerning the Lord Deputy's government, and then disposed of them one by one.

Unfortunately this document in its complete and presentable shape is lost. The only relic we have is a portion of what was evidently Philip's first rough draft. From one point of view nothing could be more interesting than this fragment, covering four closely written folio pages, with its many erasures and alterations, its

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i., p. 227.

careless slips of grammar, its jottings down in the margin of further arguments ; all helping our imagination to draw a vivid picture of the young man, sitting in some private corner—at Hampton Court, perhaps, or Baynard's Castle—and expressing the strong thoughts which stirred him alike as a son and as an Englishman. But we should have better understood its actual merit if we could have seen, in its finished state, what Waterhouse declared to be the most excellent discourse he had ever read in his life.*

Yet much may be gathered from the fragment. The whole writing was divided into seven articles. The first three, which are lost, probably dealt with the matters of greatest personal import: the extant four have to do with more general concerns. The foremost of them refers to the Lord Deputy's policy towards the nobles who claimed the privilege of exemption from taxes. "And privileged persons, forsooth, be all the rich men of the pale, the burden only lying upon the poor, who may groan, for their cry cannot be heard. And, Lord! to see how shamefully they will speak for their country that be indeed the tyrannous oppressors of their country." The protestations of such men were void as much of justice as of humanity. For this, explained Sidney, was the true state of the case. The cess, or property tax, which originally and rightly had been laid alike upon all the ploughlands of the country, had gradually come to be restricted to only a small portion. Each Deputy had granted exemption to certain favourite

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i., p. 228.

nobles, on account of their real or pretended good service. If the privilege had been merely a kindness to the great men in question, it might well have been tolerated: but it was not so, it was a heavy wrong done to the rest upon whom fell the whole burden of the taxation, and now it had reached such an extremity of injustice and inconvenience that the Lord Deputy was bound to make a reform, and to claim from all their respective contributions to the exchequer. Let learned men decide whether any obsolete grant, or any reward for notable services done in former generations, was licence for passing by all the rich men and forcing the poor remnant to bear the whole expense of the government; this poor remnant, be it remembered, being already weighed down by a cess far more grievous than her Majesty's, privately exacted by the very noblemen who had the impudence to claim entire exemption for themselves.

Sidney next referred to the private complaints of the various Irish peers, who were repeatedly inventing accusations of personal injustice shown to them by the Deputy. There was not one, he said, which, when brought into Court, had not been publicly disproved. Surely the Queen ought not to tolerate this sort of procedure, for its effect was to bring discredit not so much upon the governor as upon the government. "Neither is this way sought for any other end but that, by the disgrace of the Deputy, the people may be moved to cast off all reverence, the only bond of duty." Let their policy be seen in its true light, let the false colour of public duty be washed off from their backbitings, and no

one could be deceived. If, however, they would bring forth any complaint worth the pains, Philip would undertake to answer it.

Another complaint against the Lord Deputy was that he had offered to the nobles the payment of a steady yearly rent of five marks, in lieu of the variable cess which they averaged at ten pounds. Certainly, urged Sidney, it was strange, if the cess were really as grievous as they professed, that they should grumble at so very favourable an alternative. Was it that they thought the rent would be perpetual, whereas the cess was only casual? "Truly, either it must be said that they hope to see the Queen's authority out of the country, or else the one is of as much continuance as the other, since the garrison must have cess, and, as well as the Queen's Majesty may remit the cess at any time, so well by the like reason may it please her to remit the same rent. So that the continuance is one: the difference is between ten pounds now and five marks then.

"And this I speak as an Irish advocate: but now like a true English subject, and do esteem that to be most truly just which most truly serves the republic. Remembering first that they are in no case to be equalled to this realm, and then that they have no cause at all herein to complain, I must ever have in mind this consideration; that there is no cause, neither in reason nor in equity, why her most excellent Majesty should be at such excessive expenses to keep a realm of which scarcely he hath the acknowledgment of sovereignty; which cannot possibly be helped but by one of these three means; either by direct conquest to make the country

hers, and so by one great heap of charges to purchase that which afterwards would well countervail the principal ; or else by diminishing that she doth send thither; or, lastly, with force and gentleness, to take at least as much rents as may serve to quit the same charges. The first is always excepted, and is in her Majesty's hands to do when it shall please her. The second, whatsoever may be imagined, will in fine be found both dangerous at the first sight and impossible to continue. The last resteth ; to which there cannot be a more gentle way than this, which bears with it an apparent ease of their great grievances. So that it comes to this point, that her Majesty hath to choose, whether she will use such bounty to them as for their security only to continue her charge, or else to desire them, if they be so good subjects as they say, in this reasonable way of her service to give example to the rest of the Irishry of due subjection. And, indeed, this stretcheth to a farther benefit. For, after the rent were once settled, the soldiers should no longer live upon the English pale ; so should that rent come clearly to the Queen, and they be in garrison upon the wild, and by such force bring them to pay the rents, as they have most of them already agreed unto. But this needs longer discourse and more perfect knowledge than I confess I have. Now, only, I hope it shall suffice that a servant deserves not blame for opening a way to save his prince's treasure."

Very skilful surely is the way in which Sidney quietly worked his argument to show how his father's policy, instead of being extravagant, was really the most econo-

mical possible both for Queen Elizabeth and for the Irish people. The last point of his reasoning touched the complaint that Ireland, being farmed to the Lord Deputy, was cruelly tortured by him. The statement that Ireland was farmed was manifestly untrue, for every one could see that no former Deputy had ever been so stinted in revenue or so tied in his government, neither his counsel being followed nor himself being countenanced. Nor was the charge of cruelty valid. Sir Henry Sidney had shown not a whit more severity than was needful. It would have been wrong and foolish for him to have been over lenient. "Truly the general nature of all countries not fully conquered is against it. For until by time they find the sweetness of due subjection, it is impossible that any gentle means should put out the fresh remembrances of their lost liberty. And that the Irishman is that way as obstinate as any nation, with whom no other passion can prevail but fear—besides their history which plainly points it out—their manner of life wherein they choose rather all filthiness than any law, and their own consciences who best know their own natures, give sufficient proof of. For under the sun there is not a nation that live more tyrannously than they do one over the other; and, truly, even in her Majesty's time, the rebellions of O'Neil and all the Earl of Ormond's brethren, show well how little force any grateful love doth bear with them." "Little is lenity to prevail in minds so possessed with a natural inconstancy ever to go to a new fortune, with a revengeful hate to all English as to their only conquerors, and, that which is most of all, with so ignorant obstinacy in

Papistry that they do in their souls detest the present government.

"To conclude, whatsoever it shall please them that have both knowledge and power to determine, let gracious considerance be had of an honest servant, full of zeal in his prince's service, and not without well-grounded hopes of good success." "The Emperor Julian, to a busy accuser that told him, 'if he believed no accuser, no man should be condemned,' made answer, 'if he believed all accusers, no man should be cleared.'" *

Of this sort was Sidney's defence of his father. Every one, we are told, was struck by its eloquence and truthfulness; most of the men about the Court regarded it as a decisive answer to the various charges, and as completely settling the question. More than all, the Lord Treasurer Burghley, just come back from his summer holiday, expressed hearty approval of the Lord Deputy's conduct and entire sympathy with him. Elizabeth could no longer persist in her opposition. Her heart was not much influenced; but her judgment was forced to give way. She expressed herself satisfied with Philip's refutation of the charges against his father. Moreover, in a day or two later there arrived Sir Henry's own letter, to which I have already referred, and other explanatory documents, which quite confirmed Philip's statement. "But," added Waterhouse, "let no man compare with Mr. Philip's pen. I know he will send it your lordship, and when you read it you shall have more

* British Museum, *Cotton. MSS.*, Titus B, xii. fols. 557—559.

cause to pray God for him than to impute affection to me in this opinion of him." *

I have dwelt long upon this point in Sidney's history, but not longer than it deserves. He had achieved a real success, and of it he had reason to be very proud. It was something for him to have spoken boldly in foreign Courts on distasteful matters, and to have won the applause of statesmen and even princes; but here was a far greater undertaking. On the continent he had moved as the agent of the Queen of England, and his arguments were only half his own; but now, at Oatlands, and at Windsor, for the Court had removed to Windsor during these weeks, he stood quite on his own ground. With nothing to support him but the justice of his cause and his own natural ability, he had his sovereign for antagonist. It was a great thing to come victoriously out of such a battle and to retain all the esteem of the mistress whom he had conquered.

Indeed throughout this excitement Sidney continued to hold high place in the royal favour.† There was even some talk of his being sent on public business to Flanders, where every day the Protestant struggle was gaining fresh importance and larger interest. Thither he urged Languet to go. "You will there have," he said in a letter which he wrote from the Queen's palace on the 1st of October, "a splendid field for putting into practice, in the formation of this new commonwealth, those principles which you have so diligently studied

* *Sidney Papers*, p. 228.
† Ibid., p. 228.

during the whole course of your life." * Amidst all his home employment he was very anxiously watching the progress of affairs on the continent.

But then he seems to have watched everything with interest. During this momentous month of September he found leisure to enter warmly into a question that was then much in people's minds. The North-West Passage to India had lately grown into a very exciting topic. In 1496, John Cabot had quitted Bristol, under the auspices of King Henry the Seventh, upon a voyage which resulted in the first modern finding of the continent of America, Columbus having gone no further than the West Indies. John died in the year of success, but his son Sebastian carried on the plan of discovery. From him started the idea of seeking a North Sea route to the far east, and his efforts aroused a long and persevering search, in which England, France, Spain, and Portugal vied with one another, although England alone steadily persevered in the undertaking. A shadow had been thrown over the subject by the ill-fate of Willoughby, who, in 1553, essaying a north-eastern passage, had, after some months of prosperous sailing, perished miserably together with a crew of seventy men. But hope soon revived. In June 1576, Martin Frobisher, specially patronized by Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Warwick, started from Blackwall and was four months absent. In May, 1577, he commenced a second voyage which was terminated on the 28th of September. Philip shared all the popular excitement on the matter,

* *Zurich Letters* (ed. by Dr. Robinson for the Parker Society, 1842, 1845), Series I. p. 178.

and what he said of it in a letter to Languet, written two days later, is worth noting :

"I wrote to you a year ago, about a certain Frobisher, who, in rivalry of Magellan, has explored the sea which, as he thinks, washes the north part of America. It is a marvellous history. After having made slow progress in the past year, he touched at a certain island in order to rest both himself and his crew. And there by chance a young man, one of the ship's company, picked up a piece of earth which he saw glittering on the ground, and showed it to Frobisher ; but he, being busy with other matters, and not believing that precious metals were produced in a region so far to the north, considered it of no value. Well, they sailed homewards at the beginning of winter ; and the young man kept the earth by him as a memorial of his labour (for he had no thought of anything else), till his return to London. And there, when one of his friends saw it shining in an extraordinary manner, he tested it, and found that it was the purest gold, unalloyed with any other metal. Therefore Frobisher went back to the place this last spring, under orders to explore the island, and should it answer his expectation, to proceed no farther. This he did and he has now returned, bringing his ships—of which he had only three, and those of small size—fully laden, and he is said (for they have not yet unloaded) to have brought two hundred tons of ore. He says decidedly that the island is so productive in metals as far to surpass Peru, at least as it now is. There are also six other islands, near to this, which seem very little inferior. It is therefore at this time under debate, by what means these hitherto successful labours can be still carried on in safety against the attacks of other nations, especially of the Spaniards and Danes: the former as claiming all the western parts by right from the Pope ; the latter as being more northerly and therefore nearer and better able by reason of their possessions in Iceland, and of their skill in that sort of navigation, to carry on the undertaking. So, pray, for the sake of our love for one another, send me your opinion on this subject, and at the same time describe the most convenient method of working these ores ; for we know as little about this art as about the cultivation of vines. Remember, therefore, so to write as that you may answer to the great reputation in which you are held here ; for unless you forbid it, I will show your letter to the Queen. The thing is really very important, and it may probably, at some time or other, be of use to the professors of the true religion."*

* *Zurich Letters*, Series II. pp. 178—180.

Languet's very characteristic reply was written on the 28th of November. As the letter was to be read by Queen Elizabeth, he took the opportunity of preaching her a very sound, and not uncalled-for, sermon. Here is the English of a small part of it:

"If what you say about Frobisher be true, he seems likely to outglitter not only Magellan but even Christopher Columbus himself. Who could ever have thought that the extreme north would supply us with such a great incitement to evil? You may well despise the projected voyage to the Indies, since you have stumbled on that gift of nature, which is of all the most fatal and baneful to mankind, yet which most men so madly covet, that it stirs them, more than anything else in the world, to incur every sort of risk. I fear that England, quickened by the love of gold, will now just empty itself into those islands which Frobisher has been finding. And how much English blood, do you think, must be shed for you to keep hold of them? There is not one of our maritime nations that will not compete with you for them. In old times when some Carthaginians on a voyage in the Atlantic had been carried by a storm to land of some sort, and had come back with wonderful stories about its fruitfulness and healthiness, the senate, fearing that the people would be tempted to go thither, put to death the men who had brought the report, so that if any wished to emigrate they should have none who could guide them. Do I therefore think that you should reject these good things which God has thrown in your way? Anything but that. Nay, I thoroughly admire the high spirit, the perseverance, and even the good fortune of Frobisher; and, I think, he deserves great rewards. I have no doubt the first movers of the long and dangerous voyage he undertook had an eye to the riches which the Spaniards and Portuguese have procured by their great expeditions; and, since he has reached his mark, who can be so ungenerous as not to hold him worthy of the highest praise? But I am thinking of you, for you seem to rejoice in the circumstance as if it was the best thing possible for your country, especially as I noticed in you last spring a certain longing to undertake this kind of enterprize. And if Frobisher's foolish hope about finding a North-West Passage had power then to tempt your mind so greatly, what will not these golden mountains do, or rather these islands all of gold, as I daresay they shape themselves day and night in your mind? Beware, I do beseech you, and never let the

cursed hunger after gold, whereof the poet speaks, creep over that spirit of yours, into which nothing has ever hitherto been admitted save the love of goodness and the desire of earning the good will of all men. You are quite mistaken if you think that men naturally grow better as they grow older. It is very rarely so. It is true they become more cautious and learn to hide their vices and evil likings: but if you know an old man in whom you see any honesty, be sure he was a good man in his youth. Therefore, whenever any untried feeling affects you, be slow to indulge it, even if the object to which it leads you seem to be a good one: before you admit it, think carefully what it is that tempts you, for if you too hastily set out on any course, you may find yourself going wrong, and then you will have to turn round, or (which is more common and far worse) you will through false shame refuse to confess yourself mistaken, and so go on as you started. But what is the object of all this? you will say. That if these golden islands are fixing themselves too firmly in your thoughts, you may turn them out before they overcome you, and may keep yourself safe till you can serve your friends and your country in a better way. If a desire of fame and glory makes your present inactivity irksome to you, set before your eyes the example of the old Chandoses and Talbots. By imitating them you will win far greater honour and renown than if you could gain all the wealth which the Spaniards have brought over from the New World, and on the strength of which they have insulted all the nations of Europe, and so disgusted them with their insolence, that they now feel, and perhaps soon will feel much more, that they have made a great mistake." *

Languet's advice was very good, but, as it happened, almost superfluous. Sidney, in his next letter to his friend, had to tell him that Frobisher's ore, on being melted, had been found to be all dross.† The English could not at once give up their hopes about the fancied treasure, and Frobisher sailed again next spring partly with the view of settling the question, but the event proved that the treasure, which had been brought

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 176—178.

† *Zurich Letters*, Series II. p. 182.

home at great expense, was of less value than common stone.

Had it been otherwise, it is not at all likely that Sidney, though he may now and then have been tempted, would have really sailed with Frobisher. He had many reasons for staying at home. Both his sovereign and his father required his presence in England; and he himself, we may imagine, irrespective of any claims which others might have upon him, would at this time prefer attending the Court, where every one honoured him, and having loving intercourse with his kindred who were now seeing the first public proof of his real worth, to any cheerless voyage to the Polar Regions.

But of his occupation throughout these winter months we have very scanty knowledge. He was in frequent, if not constant, attendance at Court. He spent much time in the society of his mother, who was probably also waiting upon the Queen, and in residence at her house in Paul's Wharf. Besides sharing the gaieties at the palace, he often enjoyed in quiet the company of such chosen friends as Fulke Greville, Edward Dyer, and, when he was in England, Edward Waterhouse. He was in occasional communication with many correspondents besides Hubert Languet. Such men as the Prince of Orange and Prince John Casimir were glad to write to him and to read his letters concerning foreign politics. His hearty interest in these things also brought him into connection with all the great men of the continent who chanced to be visiting England. In June or July he had become acquainted with Philip du Plessis Mornay,

at that time seeking aid from Elizabeth on behalf of Henry of Navarre and the Protestant cause.* Mornay, like Sidney, had been hiding in Paris during the Saint Bartholomew massacre, and with Sidney he shared the especial love of Languet. He was one of the noblest of the many noble men whom the Huguenots could claim. All praised him for his gracious manners, his sound learning, his great wisdom, and his thorough goodness of heart. "I am delighted to hear that you have become intimate with Du Plessis," wrote Languet; "you cannot possibly have such another friend."† Henry, Baron of Lichtenstein, and a kinsman, it would seem, of Sidney's old friend the Count of Hannau, was also visiting London. Sidney showed him all the courtesy he could, but sent to apologize for any omissions, on the ground of his being so much employed in his father's business. "He is certainly an excellent young man," he said, "and one whom I love from my heart; and whenever any of his friends shall come hither, I will endeavour to atone for my fault."‡ In ways like these Sidney's time was well employed till the year closed.

* *Mémoires et Correspondance de Duplessis Mornay* (1824), tome i. p. 117.

† *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 167, 172.

‡ *Zurich Letters*, Series II. p. 180.

CHAPTER VII.

UNDER THE ROYAL SMILE.

1578, 1579.

Queen Elizabeth probably kept Christmas, as was her custom, at Hampton Court. Ever anxious to gather round her the wit and beauty of her realm, she made this a season of great festivity. During the summer she commonly travelled through portions of the kingdom, and was a guest of the most favoured among her courtiers; but at Christmas she was hostess, and welcomed all to share the daintiest entertainments that could be offered to eye and ear and palate. It was a pleasant and a thoroughly English custom.

Then on New Year's Day there was a general making of presents. Many tokens of friendship passed between the Queen's guests; and all joined in display of loyalty to herself. So it was every year; but there seems to have been an unusual heaping up of gifts on this 1st of January, 1578, when Sidney was at Court. Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, was prominent in the courtly business. He tendered to his Sovereign a splendid ornament of wrought gold, loaded with diamonds, rubies and opals. Then followed scores of other gifts; some of them very curious and very characteristic of the givers. The pompous Earl of Ormond brought a golden

phœnix, whose wings and feet glittered with rubies and diamonds, and which rested on a branch covered with other precious stones. Sir Christopher Hatton tendered a cross of diamonds, furnished with a suitable motto; also a gold fancy, imaging a dog leading a man over a bridge, and garnished with many gems. Lord Cobham handed up a petticoat of yellow satin, laid all over with ornaments of silver and tawny silk, fringed with more silver and silk, and lined with tawny sarcenet, while his wife presented a white petticoat, similarly adorned. The Countess of Essex offered a dainty little parcel of ruffs. Still daintier was Lady Sidney's present of a pair of perfumed gloves, together with twenty-four small buttons of gold, each one having a tiny diamond set in its centre. Her daughter the Countess of Pembroke brought a doublet of lawn, embroidered with gold and silver and silk of divers colours, and lined with yellow taffeta. In odd contrast was her son Philip's present of a cambric chemise, its sleeves and collar wrought with black work and edged with a small bone-lace of gold and silver. With it was a pair of ruffs interlaced with gold and silver, and set with spangles which alone weighed four ounces. Sidney and his friend Fulke Greville must have taken counsel beforehand, for Greville also brought a cambric chemise, very similarly ornamented. His other great friend, Edward Dyer, with rather better taste, tendered a kirtle made of lawn and embroidered with flowers of gold. Meanwhile, the humbler followers of the Court were not backward in their show of loyalty. The chief laundress presented to Her Majesty three pocket-hand-

kerchiefs and a tooth-cloth. Another attendant, I suppose a chambermaid, gave a linen night-cap ; and some one else provided another night-cap made of cambric. One named Newton, who must have been head-gardener, sent up a silver-gilt porringer with a snail sticking to an oak-leaf for handle. The apothecaries, of whom there were two or three, made presents of green ginger, orange candy, and that kind of stuff. The cutler tendered a meat-knife with a white bone handle and a motto carved thereon. The dustman, not well able to typify his office, made clean choice of two bolts of cambric : but the sergeant of the pastry plied his trade in producing a great quince pie, with gilt adornments.*

In return for all such presents—and I have only enumerated a few as specimens of the courtly gifts of the Elizabethan day—the Queen made an almost unvarying return of gilt plate, showing her esteem by the quantity of the article. The Earl of Leicester, this New Year's Day, received a hundred ounces, while the Earl of Ormond was honoured with a hundred and sixty-one, and Sir Christopher Hatton, just now floating upon the very surface of queenly favour, was freighted with as much as four hundred ounces' weight of royal love. These courtiers and a few others were, of course, far above the average. It was no disrespect to Lady Sidney that she received a present weighing but thirty ounces and three quarters, or to the Countess of Pembroke, that only two pounds' weight was given to her.

* Nichols, *Progresses*, vol. ii. pp. 64—80.

The Queen's affection for Sidney was good for two-and-twenty ounces; while to Edward Dyer was set down a gift weighing sixteen ounces, and to Fulke Greville another weighing thirteen ounces. The inferior attendants received two or three or more ounces a-piece.*

Philip Sidney had to exchange New Year's greetings with some of the most memorable men and women in English history. At no other time surely has so much splendour been displayed in England as might be seen in the Elizabethan Court. Besides the great Queen herself—great notwithstanding all the littlenesses which deface her character—and such famous men as Burghley and Leicester, there were a host of very notable courtiers with whom Sidney was intimate.

Most showy, perhaps, of all was Sir Christopher Hatton, now in his thirty-eighth year, and a month old in knighthood. Ten years earlier he had joined in writing a play, *Tancred and Gismund*, which he had also helped to perform before Elizabeth, and from that time he steadily rose in the royal favour. Once, indeed, he had had a tiff with Her Majesty, but he soon won back her smile by writing a most humble letter, to show how entirely he loved the presence and service to which he had eternally consecrated his whole life, liberty, and fortune, and signing himself her "despairing, most wretched bondman." † The Queen, either for some special charm, or in mere joke, called him her Lids or Eye-lids. When he was sent to Antwerp he wrote,

* Nichols, *Progresses*, vol. ii. pp. 81—90.

† State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Series, Elizabeth*, vol. lxxxix. No. 47.

on the road, to thank her for the gracious letters with which she had comforted him during the great grief of two days' absence from her, and to assure her that all his faults would be washed away by the tears that fell from "her poor Lids." * In the next letter he tendered fresh vows of devotion, lamented that twelve whole days had passed since he had seen that sun whose brightness alone gave light to his soul, and implored her never, never to forget her Lids, so often watered for her sake.† Two months later, still in Antwerp, he wrote to say how the last letter from her had warmed his heart's blood with joys above joys, thanked her for her continued favour, and on the knees of his heart commended his faithful love to her.‡ What wonder that the mistress who loved flattery more even than money, should this year have rewarded her worshipper with four hundred ounces of plate,—or that at another time, when Bishop Cox of Ely protested against Hatton Garden being built upon the ground lawfully belonging to Ely Place in Holborn, she should have written thus to the poor Bishop, "Proud Prelate, you know what you were before I made you what you are; if you do not immediately comply with my request, by God, I will unfrock you!"

Hatton may stand as representative of a school of courtiers, made as fulsome and low-thoughted as they were by the temperament of their Sovereign. But Hatton was a good, well-meaning man at heart, widely

* State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Series, Elizabeth*, vol. xci. No. 45.

† Ibid., vol. xci. No. 52.

‡ Ibid., vol. xcii. No. 20.

separated from such an one as Edward Vere, the Earl of Oxford, now thirty-three years old. Brought long ago into singular contact with Sidney from having been the favoured suitor for the hand of Anne Cecil, between the two there was acquaintance but no friendship. He had lately returned from a sojourn in Italy, and the report of his vicious practices there had for a time estranged from him not only his gentle wife, but even the whole Court. The efforts of his father-in-law Burghley, however, and his own handsome person and gay bearing had soon secured for him pardon. Moreover, he had brought back from Venice sweet bags and other dainties, never before known in England, and the Queen's heart was captivated when he put upon her hands a pair of perfumed gloves trimmed with tufts of coloured silk.

Superior to either of these men was Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, now about forty-two. He was kinsman to the Queen, and in his youth she had helped to reclaim him from the prodigality into which he had fallen, by swearing that she would never know him until he knew himself. Now he lived prudently and honestly, and was, in his way, a wise statesman and an upright courtier. He greatly helped the progress of literature, both by his own skilful pen and by his zealous patronage of others. There had been some strife between him and Sir Henry Sidney, but in 1574 he had healed the breach by writing a very manly letter, offering honourable amendment and urging that there should be peace between them. Eighteen years older than Philip,

the latter must often have resorted to him for literary talk and counsel.

But Sidney's best adviser and truest friend was Sir Francis Walsingham. He had met and received great kindness from him more than five years ago when in Paris during part of the memorable massacre year, and from that time he had been fondly looked after by the wise Secretary. Walsingham, greatly deceived during his French embassage, never forgot the blunder. All through his tenure of office as Secretary of State, in which he succeeded Cecil, he was very cautious and very watchful of the Queen's interests. There was a sturdy honesty about him, which marks him out as almost the worthiest man in the whole Court. Indeed he was too honest and plain-spoken to prosper. No such rewards in property as fell to Elizabeth's useless followers ever reached him. Knighthood, however, cost nothing; so in company with Hatton he had been knighted on the 1st of December, 1577.

There is yet one more friend of Sidney's to be mentioned. This was Sir Francis Knollys, now an elderly man of about sixty. Far more even than Walsingham he contrasted with the young and dashing courtiers who monopolized the Queen's sweetest smiles. Almost a Puritan in creed, he seems to have held honest place in a Court which must have been on some accounts distasteful to him, in order that he might watch and protect the interests of the radical party in the Church.

His daughter Lettice, Countess of Essex, was also now with the Court. The general desire for a cessation of all the strifes which had prevailed during her hus-

band's lifetime, and the great favour shown every where to her handsome and witty son, were the apparent reasons for her return; although doubtless the true motive was a secret one best known to the Earl of Leicester. There is a statement, with some possibility of truth in it, that long ere now she had been privately wedded to the Earl; at any rate, there was as much love existing between them as can generally be felt by a selfish, lustful man, and a haughty, ambitious woman, with many great and even good parts, but not over-delicate by nature. Therefore she came to Court and, for my Lord of Leicester's sake, endured the real frown which the Queen was seeking to twist into the likeness of a smile.

With her must have been her eldest daughter, Penelope Devereux. She was now in her fifteenth year, growing rapidly in all womanly grace and beauty, and promptly learning how most skilfully to use her arts of fascination. Philip Sidney, as we have already seen, and as we shall see still more hereafter, was her avowed worshipper. But of his present worship we have no trustworthy record. Just now it may have been not very zealous; for he had other thoughts than those of love to trouble him.

He was only three-and-twenty; he had but lately made a splendid beginning of courtier-life; by every one he was either honoured or envied: yet already he was growing weary of his position, had begun to be weary of his whole life. To him the splendour of the Elizabethan Court was thraldom. He wanted to be working, to be doing some good in the world. It was

a noble discontent, bespeaking the greatness of his mind, and it moved him to loud and very honest complaints. "The use of the pen," he said mournfully in a letter to Languet, written from Court on the 1st of March, in this year, 1578, "has plainly gone from me; and my mind itself, if ever it was active about anything, is now, by reason of my indolent sloth, beginning imperceptibly to lose its strength, and to lose it without any reluctance. For with what end should our thoughts be directed to various kinds of knowledge, unless room be appointed for putting it in practice, so that the public welfare, which in a corrupt age we cannot hope for, may result? Who would learn music, if not for the sake of giving pleasure? or architecture, if not with a view to building? But the mind, you will say, that particle of the Divine Mind, is educated by this thraldom. That, if we may believe it, is a very great advantage. But does it not rather appear that we thus give a very false, albeit a very beautiful, outside to our splendid errors? For while the mind is thus, as it were, drawn out of itself, it cannot turn its force inwards for thorough self-examination, with which employment no other labour that men can undertake is at all to be compared. Do you not see that I am cleverly playing the stoic? yea, and unless you reclaim me, I shall presently be a cynic too."*

Sidney was watching with great attention the progress of affairs on the continent, especially in the Netherlands; and he longed to take part in the strife.

* *Zurich Letters*, Series II. p. 182.

Since the new year his interest had been further quickened by the coming over from Germany of his friends Robert Beale and Daniel Rogers,* both of them experienced agents of the English Government at various foreign Courts. With these was Peter Butrech, whom Sidney playfully called the Equestrian Doctor, because he so thoroughly combined learning and soldiership in the service of Prince Casimir and in the general cause of Protestantism. He had come over to stir up as much English excitement as possible on behalf of the Huguenot warfare; and Sidney blamed Elizabeth very much because of her tardiness in giving help, or in any way listening to the honest arguments of Leicester, Walsingham, and others, who wished an army to be sent over at once.† If this had been done Sidney would have gone with the expedition. Its hindrance was a great trouble to him. "Unless God powerfully counteract it," he wrote to Languet, on the 10th of March, "I think I see our cause withering away, and I am even now meditating some Indian project." ‡ What this Indian project was we do not know; most likely he himself did not know, save that he felt anxious to do anything rather than live listlessly in England, hearing fulsome compliments paid to the Queen, and conscious that from him like service was expected.

Languet counselled very wisely. No one could be more zealous than he was for the advancement of the

* *Zurich Letters*, Series II. p. 181.

† Ibid., p. 184; *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 190.

‡ *Zurich Letters*, Series II. p. 184.

Belgian struggle on behalf of freedom ; but he was not unmindful of his young friend's safety, or of society's high claims upon him. He wished him to be a statesman rather than a soldier. "I would not," he said in one letter, "even if I could, weaken or blunt the edge of your spirit ; but I must advise you now and then to reflect that young men who incautiously rush into danger almost always die ingloriously, and destroy their power of really serving their country. For he who falls in his mere youth cannot have done very much for his nation. Look to it, therefore, and let no outrageous coveting of fame hurry you out of your proper track ; and be sure that you give not the name of courage to a false sentiment which only has something in common with it. This is the misfortune, or rather the folly, of our age, that so many men of noble birth think it more honourable to do the work of a soldier than that of a leader, and would rather win credit for their boldness than for their judgment."* Ten weeks later, he wrote still more decisively and clearly : "Most high born men are seized with this madness, that they covet a reputation earned by bloodshed, and believe that there can be no glory for them save that which is connected with the destruction of mankind. At any rate, it is wrong for you, whom God has adorned with so many splendid gifts, to feel as they do who are buried in the deepest shades of ignorance, and think that all human excellence consists in physical strength ; for let them be ever so strong, they are in this respect far inferior to

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 190.

many brutes. Make use then of that particle of the Divine Mind, as you finely term it, for the safety, not for the ruin, of men. You need never fear that you will rust for want of work, if only you are willing to employ your mind. For in so large a kingdom as yours there can never be lacking chances of exercising your genius, so that many may see the good fruit of honest labour. You may be sure that praise and glory are the reward of goodness, and never fail of being duly paid. If you marry a wife, and beget children like yourself, you will be a better servant of your country than if you would cut the throats of a thousand Spaniards or Frenchmen." *

It is odd that Languet should have been so very anxious for Sidney to be married. In almost every letter he urged it, sometimes playfully, at other times in all seriousness. In the one from which I am now quoting, he repeated the story told by Herodotus concerning Crœsus, who, when asked by Cambyses whether he or his father were the better man, answered, "Sir, your father must be held better than you, for he was the father of the greatest of princes ; while you have as yet no son like yourself." † "You see," added Languet, "I am not trying, as you say, to cover faults with a specious and splendid colouring, nor am I recommending to you idleness and ease,—at least if you believe the poet who advises any man that wishes plenty of trouble, to get him a wife." ‡

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, pp. 196, 197.
† Herodotus, lib. iii. c. 34.
‡ *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 197.

Whether troublesome or not, Sidney did not just now wish for a wife. He longed to be about some active work. If he could not join in the cause headed by the Prince of Orange and aided by all his continental friends, he was anxious to do something else. Perhaps, as Languet had suspected, he was a little disposed to accompany Captain Frobisher in the third expedition, the largest till then ever equipped for the arctic seas, which he was busily preparing this spring under the auspices of the Earl of Warwick. But Sidney could not be spared. The Queen claimed his attendance at Court, and it was to his father's interest that he should be there.

Sir Henry Sidney's troubles, though not so overwhelming as in the autumn of 1577, were by no means really removed. The Queen had for a time been satisfied. She had written one friendly letter at which the Lord Deputy expressed himself highly delighted.* But the old wound was not at all healed, —could never properly be healed without a change of Elizabeth's whole character. The state of Ireland compelled frequent outlay of money for its defence. The Queen herself was sending to urge Sir Henry to be watchful and to make due preparations for meeting the impending dangers.† But she expected all this to be done without any drain upon her Exchequer, and, because it was not so, she was very angry. On the 20th of January, Sir Francis Walsingham wrote to the Lord Deputy to say that Her Majesty was now some-

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 232. † Ibid., p. 233.

what appeased, although, on account of the charges which continued, and were not likely to be lessened during his government, she was disposed to revoke him. Walsingham added that he felt it right to give him secret and early notice of this new change in the royal mind, and to assure him that he and all other friends at Court would do their utmost to have the recal effected under some such cover as the conferment of a peerage, due both to the Lord Deputy's credit and to the Queen's honour.*

Her Majesty, however, was not acting in a very honourable way. "I hear," wrote poor Sir Henry on the 13th of February, "not a little to my grief and discomfort, that your Highness hath denied to sign your warrant to the payment of three thousand and one pounds, that is due unto me upon certain bills; supposing that those bills were gained by me, or at the least were easily come by and procured. I am sorry, my most dear Sovereign, that my hard hap is such, so to be condemned without cause, or suspected without desert; and for trial of the truth, would to God it would please your Majesty to appoint commissioners, or some others of trust, to examine the matter and report what they find to your Highness. It would then plainly and truly appear unto you that I have been misreported unto your Majesty." He showed how the money was properly his own, and went on to say that, in the present case, the Queen's conduct was especially hard, as he wanted the amount, all but the one odd pound, for

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 234.

payment to the Earl of Pembroke as the residue of the marriage portion of his daughter Mary. This was a matter in which his honour was especially involved, and to be thus unjustly thwarted by Her Majesty was a great grief and torment to him.*

It is not strange that Philip should have little liking for the Court, and should find no enjoyment in the smiles that were being freely showered upon him by the same mistress who used such meanness towards his father. He must stay at Court, however, if only for his father's sake. He had to keep close watch upon the progress of affairs, do all that he could on the spot, and as need arose, send truthful report and sound advice to Dublin. All this was not easy. "So strangely and diversely goes the course of the world," he wrote sententiously on the 25th of April, "by the interchanging humours of those that govern it, that, though it be most noble always to have one mind and one constancy, yet can it not always be directed to one point, but must needs sometimes alter his course according as the force of others' changes drives it." He then proceeded to tell his father that—whereas he had lately advised him to return as soon as convenient, being encouraged thereto by the assurance his best friends had given him of the favourable consideration which Sir Henry would meet—he now thought it well for him to stay in Ireland as long as was possible, at any rate till Michaelmas, when his term of office would expire, and he might come back with least causing of scandal.

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. pp. 235—238.

"In the mean time your friends may labour here to bring to a better pass such your reasonable and honourable desires, which time can better bring forth than speech; and among which friends, before God, there is none proceeds either so thoroughly or so wisely as your lady, my mother. For mine own part I have had only light from her." *

This letter shows us how dutifully and prudently Philip was struggling to be of use in these difficult affairs of his father. Another and shorter letter written by him three days later pleasantly lays open to us his mind, in its friendliest and most playful mood. It is addressed to Mr. Edward Waterhouse, at that time attending upon Sir Henry Sidney in Dublin:

"My good Ned,

"Never since you went that ever you wrote to me; and yet I have not failed to do some friendly offices for you here. 'How know I that?' say you; 'I cannot tell.' But *I* know that no letters I have received from you. Thus doth unkindness make me fall to a point of kindness. Good Ned, either come or write: let me either see thee, hear thee, or read thee. Your other friends, that knowmore, will write more fully: I, of myself, thus much, always one and in one case, *me toto exultans teres atque rotundus.* Commend me to my Lord President, to the noble Sir Nicholas, whom I bear a special good will to, and to my cousin Henry Harrington, whom I long to see in health, Sir Nicholas Bagnol, Mr. Agard's daughter, my cousin Spikman for your sake, and whoever is Mayor of Dublin for my sake, and even at his house when you think good. I bid you farewell. From Court, this 28th of April, 1578.

"Your very loving friend,

"Philip Sidney." †

A month later Sidney wrote another short letter to

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. pp. 247, 248.

† Ibid., pp. 389, 390.

Dublin, also too characteristic to be passed by. This second one was written to Mr. Edmund Molineux, the Lord Deputy's secretary. Some weeks before, Philip had said to his father, "I must needs impute it to some men about you that there is little written from you or to you that is not perfectly known to your professed enemies;" * and now his suspicions wrongly but not unnaturally fell upon the secretary. He wrote to him in high anger:

"MR. MOLINEUX,

"Few words are best. My letters to my father have come to the ears of some: neither can I condemn any but you. If it be so, you have played the very knave with me; and so I will make you know, if I have good proof of it. But that for so much as is past. For that is to come, I assure you, before God, that if ever I know you do so much as read any letter I write to my father, without his commandment or my consent, I will thrust my dagger into you. And trust to it, for I speak in earnest. In the meantime, farewell. From Court, this last of May, 1578.

"By me,
"PHILIP SIDNEY."†

Molineux met this haughty, indignant, and withal unjust treatment with great moderation and dignity.

"SIR," he wrote back, "I have received a letter from you which as it is the first, so the same is the sharpest that I ever received from any; and therefore it amazeth me the more to receive such a one from you, since I have (the world can judge) deserved better somewhere, howsoever it pleased you to condemn me now. But since it is (I protest to God) without cause, or yet just ground of suspicion, you use me thus, I bear the injury more patiently for a time, and mine innocency I hope in the end shall try mine honesty, and then I trust you

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 247.
† Ibid., p. 256.

will confess that you have done me wrong. And since your pleasure so is expressed, that I shall not henceforth read any of your letters (although I must confess I have heretofore taken both great delight and profit in reading some of them), yet, upon so hard a condition as you seem to offer, I will not hereafter adventure so great a peril, but obey you herein. Howbeit, if it had pleased you, you might have commanded me in a far greater matter with a far less penalty. From the Castle of Dublin, the 1st of July, 1578.

"Yours, when it shall please you better to conceive of me, humbly to command,

"E. Molineux." *

But this is in advance of our chronology. Sidney, as we have seen, was with the Court in April. Soon afterwards he attended the Queen on the first portion of her customary summer progress. Going first to Theobald's, the residence of Lord Treasurer Burghley, Her Majesty lodged there for three or four days, and then proceeded to Wanstead, in Epping Forest.† This place had been purchased, a year or so before, by the Earl of Leicester, and now, having fitted it in princely style, he was honoured with a visit from the Queen. He does not seem to have prepared any such splendid entertainments as have made Kenilworth memorable; but—and this is a matter more important in relation to our present theme—he induced his nephew Philip to write a masque to be performed for Her Majesty's amusement.

This masque, entitled *The Lady of the May*, is the first of Sidney's known compositions. Giving small evidence of dramatic power, it is worth reading for its indication of the author's mind. In it there was

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 256.

† Nichols, *Royal Progresses of Elizabeth*, vol. ii. p. 94.

avoidance of such fulsome flattery of the Queen as was generally thought needful in performances prepared for her pleasure. It contained some flattering words about her, but Sidney shrewdly put them into the mouths of speakers of whom he was making fun, and in that way showed, to others if not to the vain Queen herself, that, instead of praising, he was really laughing at her.

At Wanstead Her Majesty remained some days, and then she seems to have gone to her own palace at Greenwich. There, towards the end of May, she entertained Captain Frobisher and the other adventurers starting for the northern seas. Towards all of them she used gentle speech, and to Frobisher she gave a gold chain as a keepsake.

Philip Sidney, doubtless, was present on that occasion. On the 1st of June he gave proof of his friendship for Du Plessis Mornay and his wife, who were again in London, by standing as god-father to their infant daughter Elizabeth.* At about this period, moreover, he received some appointment from the Queen.† "Before," wrote Languet, "I was fearful lest the ardour of youth might suggest some rash project, and fate snatch you from your country and your friends to cause you an inglorious end; for I heard talk about distant voyages, and Belgian soldiering. But now that you are no longer your own master, and that your new

* *Mémoires de Du Plessis Mornay*, tome i. p. 119.

† Zouch says he was made cupbearer to the Queen. I cannot find his authority for the statement, although it is plausible enough.

honours have so tied you to your country that you must consult its advantage rather than your own pleasure, I am a good deal rid of my anxiety : not that I think you less liable to danger than you were before, but that the perils you have to undergo for your country must now bring you honour and praise. I congratulate you, therefore, upon the favour with which your wise sovereign has honoured you, only to excite you to the further pursuit of virtue." *

Whatever may have been Sidney's new office, Languet appears to have over-estimated its importance, just as a month or two later, he was inclined to believe an absurd report that the young man had been appointed Vice-Admiral of the Fleet.† But it is clear that, notwithstanding the growing disfavour with which his father was being regarded and the openness with which he himself supported the just cause, Philip was rising steadily in the royal liking and gaining much admiration from both courtiers and common folk.

About Midsummer, or soon after, Queen Elizabeth set out on a progress of unusual splendour, and Sidney with the rest of the Court, started with her. After paying some short visits in passing, the royal party reached Audley End on Saturday, the 26th of July. Thither, according to arrangement, the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, and all the Heads of Colleges came on Sunday to pay their respects to Her Majesty. On their behalf was uttered a very laudatory oration,

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 199, 200.

† Ibid., p. 203.

showing how the universities had been nourished by her, as by a loving nurse, in all piety and all learning. Then they presented to her a splendid copy of Robert Stephens' new and erudite edition of the Greek Testament, bound in red velvet, and with the arms of England depicted on each side. Lastly, they gave her a pair of gloves, worth sixty shillings, exquisitely perfumed, and covered with embroidery and goldsmith's work. "Her Majesty, beholding the beauty of the said gloves," says a contemporary authority, "as in great admiration and in token of her thankful acceptation of the same, held up one of her hands, and then, smelling unto them, put them half-way upon her hands." Presents of gloves which cost twenty shillings a pair, were next made, with suitable speeches, to Lords Burghley and Leicester; and others, which had the more modest value of four shillings and twopence, were offered to the Earl of Sussex, Lord Hunsdon, Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir Francis Knollys, and some other courtiers. The day was closed with some philosophical disputations, in which a prominent part was taken by Mr. Gabriel Harvey of Pembroke Hall. After three hours' talking, during which Lord Burghley was moderator, the discussion ended at midnight, when the learned guests were honourably dismissed. They had to finish their busy Sunday by walking, at that unreasonable hour, all the way back to Cambridge, no lodging being procurable at Saffron Walden.*

In the beginning of August the Queen, continuing her

* Nichols, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, vol. ii. pp. 110—115.

journey, entered Suffolk, where great preparations had been made for her reception. Five hundred gentlemen all clad either in white or in black velvet, together with fifteen hundred serving men, well and bravely mounted, came out to greet her.* At many houses in succession she was lodged and feasted; and from Suffolk, where her entertainers were chiefly noblemen, she went on to Norfolk, whose inhabitants, less aristocratic, were equally hearty in their demonstrations of loyalty. At Norwich, Thomas Churchyard was employed to furnish masques and pageants, which proved to be far superior in literary merit to Sidney's *Lady of the May*, and with them Elizabeth was much pleased. She lingered in the neighbourhood for some time, and went home by way of Wanstead.

She was not at Wanstead on the 20th September. On that day the Earl of Leicester was privately wedded to the Countess of Essex. About this marriage there is much mystery; towards the solution of which many surmises were afloat at the time. According to one, perhaps the best, there had already been an espousal quite secret and almost unwitnessed; and now, the rumour of it having come to the ears of Sir Francis Knollys, that sturdy old courtier had compelled the Earl to place his daughter in a position which would remove from her all possibility of dishonour. At any rate, whether for the first or for the second time, the marriage was effected at Wanstead. The union, however, was kept as secret as possible, only Sir Francis

* Nichols, vol. ii. p. 116.

Knollys and one other witness being present. The Earl of Leicester still flirted with his Queen, and his wife continued to be known as the Dowager Countess of Essex.

Philip Sidney was certainly not at the wedding; nor does it appear that he was long in attendance on the Queen after her visit to Audley End. Foreign business seems just now to have fully occupied him. Some months earlier his friend Prince Casimir had been appointed Queen Elizabeth's agent, to watch the affairs of Germany and the Netherlands. For this office, indeed, he was selected, partly through the interest of Sidney, and by the advice of Languet. Both men sadly over-estimated his powers. "To no one," Languet had written on the 26th of December, 1577, "can this command be better entrusted than to him. In fact, you yourself know that he is the only man in Germany to whom it could be entrusted at all, whether we consider his zeal and respect for her gracious Majesty and your nation, or the splendour of his birth, or the fitness of his age, or his successful training in arms, or the goodwill of military men towards him." *

Queen Elizabeth's judgment was almost as favourable. She therefore nominated Casimir her lieutenant, and furnished him with money for collecting a little army. The Prince left the Palatinate about the middle of June, and reached Zutphen in July, where he loitered idly, through several precious weeks. On the 26th of August, at the head of twelve thousand men, he joined the Belgian

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 184.

troops, saying pompously to the Prince of Orange that now he hoped there would be two heads under one hat.*

When Sidney heard, early in July, that his friend was in the field, all his old anxiety to share the strife revived. This he would doubtless have done had not a touching letter arrived from his father. "Philip," wrote the Lord Deputy, on the 1st of August, when he was on the point of returning to England to surrender his office, "by the letters you wrote me by Sackford, you have discovered unto me your intention to go over into the Low Countries to accompany Duke Casimir, who hath, with so noble offer and by so honourable means convited you: which disposition of your virtuous mind as I must needs much commend in you, so when I enter into the consideration of mine own estate, and call to mind what practices, informations, and wicked accusations are devised against me, and what an assistance in the defence of those causes your presence would be unto me, reposing myself so much both upon your help and judgment, I strive betwixt honour and necessity what allowance I may best give of that motion for your going. Howbeit, if you think not my matters of that weight and difficulty, as I hope they be not, but that they may well enough by myself, without your assistance or any other, be brought to an honourable end, I will not be against your determination; yet would wish you, before your departure, that you come to me at the water's side, about the latter end of this month, to take your leave of me, and so from thence to depart towards your intended

* Motley, *Dutch Republic*, vol. iii. p. 336.

journey. You must now bear with me that I write not this unto you with mine own hand, which I would have done if the indisposition of my body had not been such as I could not. God prosper you in that you shall go about, and send you to win much honour and credit; and I send you my daily blessing." *

After receiving such a letter, Philip could hardly leave England. He again abandoned the enterprize on which his heart was set. And it was very well that he did; for nothing but mischief resulted from Casimir's proceedings. Even Languet rejoiced in his friend's absence. "If you had come into Belgium," he said, "I should immediately have hurried to meet you. It would have been extremely delightful to me to have seen you; yet I should not have been altogether pleased at your coming amongst men with whom you could not have lived happily, and to a place in which you could have had no enjoyment beyond the friendship of Prince Casimir, who of course would have shown you every attention. But it would have been cheerless work for you living in a camp where you would have seen no examples of valour, no tokens of good soldiership,—only troops disobeying their leaders, and acting with insolence and cowardice. There are other reasons also, besides those which you mention, that might well keep you from this expedition. Lucan makes Cato exclaim: 'Brutus, there is no blacker crime than civil war!'

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 392.—On the same 1st of August Lord Deputy also wrote to Leicester, asking him to consider what was best for Philip to do, and to advise him accordingly. The letter is among the *Cotton MSS.*, *Titus*, B. xii. fo. 250.

and Cicero says, 'No war is just save that which is necessary.' Now, although the Belgians have good cause to defend their liberty by arms against the tyranny of the Spaniards, this is nothing to you. If indeed your Queen had been bound by treaty to send them troops, and had commanded you to go with these troops, then the obligation to obey her who is your ruler would have made you regard the enemies of the Belgian States as your own foes. But from a mere desire for praise and glory, and that you might give public proof of your courage, you determined to treat as your personal enemies those who seemed to you to be taking the wrong side in the war. It is not your business, it is not for any private person, to pass judgment on a question of this kind; it belongs to the magistrate (by magistrate I mean the prince), who, whenever a question of the sort is to be determined, calls to his council those men whom he believes to be just and wise. Young noblemen like you are apt to consider that nothing brings you more honour than wholesale slaughter; and you are generally guilty of the greatest injustice, for if you kill a man against whom you have no lawful cause of war, you are killing one who, as far as concerns you, is innocent. The ancients, though they knew nothing of the true God, were strictly religious in this matter. The elder Cato, when his son was going to Spain, wrote to charge him against using his sword until he had taken an oath to his general; for, as a just man, he might not do it otherwise. But this age of ours has lost all honourable discipline, and laughs at such principles." "Great praise is due," added Lan-

guet, after more talk on this subject, "to those who bravely defend their country from foreign invasion; but they are to be praised, not for the number of foes whom they have killed, but for the defence they have given to their own cities. Those are the wars in which true glory is won; but in our times they are most highly admired whose mad ambition causes most bloodshed." *

Here Languet was evidently thinking of Don John of Austria and some other notable men of the day, whom even enemies admired for their wild love of war. "I am very much grieved," he said, in another part of the letter, "to hear you say that you are weary of the life to which I have no doubt God has called you, and that you wish to flee from the glitter of your Court and betake yourself to some secluded place, where you may avoid the troubles which perplex and engross all who live within the circle of government. I know that in the splendour of a Court there are so many temptations to vice that it is very hard for a man to hold himself clean among them, and to stand upright on such a slippery ground: but you must struggle virtuously and boldly against these difficulties, remembering that the glory of victory is always great in proportion to the peril undergone. Nature has endowed you with great gifts of mind and body; fortune has favoured you with noble birth and many splendid accomplishments. From your boyhood you have made study of all the most useful arts. Will you then, furnished with such wea-

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 207—209.

pons, refuse the help which your country demands, and bury in the earth the large talent which God has entrusted to you?" *

In nearly every letter that he wrote to Languet, Sidney complained of the ignoble life which he was almost compelled to follow. Good sense was in his friend's moralizing, although it is not likely to have given him lasting comfort. Just now, however, there was some satisfaction for him in the company of his father, and some employment in helping to manage the family affairs.

Towards the end of September the Lord Deputy quitted Ireland, and he reached London about the middle of October. On the 11th of that month, Lady Mary Sidney wrote a letter to Edmund Molineux, who had returned to England shortly before his master. This letter gives us very quaint information respecting courtly usage in the age of Elizabethan splendour. "I have thought good," wrote Lady Sidney, "to put you in remembrance to move my Lord Chamberlain, in my Lord's name, to have some other room than my chamber for my Lord to have his resort unto, as he was wont to have; or else my Lord will be greatly troubled when he shall have any matter of dispatch, my lodging, you see, being very little, and myself continually sick and not able to be much out of my bed. For the night-time, one roof, with God's grace, shall serve us; for the day-time, the Queen will look to have my chamber always in readiness for her Majesty's coming thither;

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 210.

and though my Lord himself can be no impediment thereto by his own presence, yet his Lordship, trusting to no place else to be provided for him, will be, as I said before, troubled for want of a convenient place to the dispatch of such people as shall have occasion to come to him. Therefore I pray you move my Lord of Sussex for a room for that purpose, and I will have it hanged and lined for him with stuff from home." *

There is something very odd in the state of things here indicated. The invalid wife of the Lord Deputy of Ireland has only a bed-room to live in while she waits upon the Court. The bed-room will serve for my Lady to receive visits from the Queen, or for my Lord to discuss public business with any, great or little, who may call upon him; but it will hardly hold both sovereign and subject at the same time. Therefore, another room is asked for, on condition that her Majesty shall not be put to the expense of furnishing the same, as suitable stuff can be brought from Sir Henry Sidney's own abode.

Yet this was too great a favour to be granted readily, if it was granted at all. A few days later, on a Monday, Lady Sidney wrote again to Molineux, saying, "You have used the matter very well; but we must do more yet for the good dear Lord than let him thus be dealt withal. Hampton Court I never yet knew so full as there were not spare rooms in it when it hath been thrice better filled than at this present it is. But some will be sorry, perhaps, my Lord should have so sure

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 271.

footing in the Court. Well, all may be as well, when the good God will: the whilst I pray let us do what we may for my Lord's ease and quiet." She suggested various ways in which Molineux might seek the loan, during day-time, of a room which could be a sort of office or parlour for her husband. But if all these failed, she added, "when the worst is known, old Lord Harry and his old Moll will do as well as they can in parting, like good friends, the small portion allotted our long service in Court." *

It is to be hoped that in the end Lady Sidney gained her point. At any rate the Lord Deputy, on his return to England, and after resignation of his office, seems to have gone for a part of the winter to lodge at Hampton Court. There was much to be done in completing his Irish business, in guarding against the treacherous attacks of his many enemies, in setting affairs in their proper light before the Queen, and, hardest of all, in seeking to procure from her so much favour as was his due. In all these Philip gave him much help; indeed it is likely that he did the chief part of the work. Sir Henry, though now only in his fiftieth year, was almost broken in body, if not in mind. Harassed on all sides, he trusted implicitly to his loving, bold, and clear-headed son, who, now just twenty-four years old, had all the freshness of youth, and moreover had the very great advantage of being much liked by the Queen.

Yet Sir Henry Sidney was not now ostensibly out of favour with his sovereign. She had no fair excuse for

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 271.

being angry with him; perhaps the anger which she did feel was nearly balanced by a kindly recollection of the great services he had done her, and a knowledge of the nobleness of mind to which, however much she would, she could not blind herself. Forced to resign his appointment in Ireland, he retained office as Lord President of Wales, a situation almost equal to the other in dignity, though far inferior in real importance and in emolument. There was an undercurrent of meanness, such as always marked the royal dissatisfaction; but a fair show of favour was on the surface.

Of the detail of these months, however, as concerns either Philip or his father, we have very scanty record. They, together with Lady Sidney and the Countess of Pembroke and her husband, kept Christmas at Hampton Court, where there seems to have been less gaiety than usual. On the first day of 1579, not so many or such handsome presents were made to her Majesty as had been tendered twelve months ago. Sir Henry Sidney presented a gold ornament on which was carved an image of Diana, richly garnished with diamonds, one of them much larger than the rest, with three large pearls and with three rubies. Lady Mary brought a chemise, besides two cambric pillow-cases, adorned with black work and edged with a broad bone-lace. Philip presented a bodice of white sarcenet, quilted and embroidered with gold, silver, and silk of divers colours, with a passamaine lace of gold and silver round about it. The Countess of Pembroke, following the fashion which was common this year, made a plain substantial gift of

ten pounds, and her husband offered double that sum.* As usual, the Queen made return-gifts of gold plate. Sir Henry Sidney received a hundred and thirty-eight ounces, and to his wife were presented three gilt cups and covers, weighing in all thirty ounces. To the Earl of Pembroke was given a bowl and cover weighing twenty-nine ounces, and to his lady a gilt pot of twenty-three ounces. Only a score of ounces fell to Philip Sidney's share.†

The festivities of the New Year, if not remarkably brilliant, were of long continuance. The chief cause of this was the coming over of Prince Casimir. The Prince had not done much good by his expedition into the Netherlands. After making a show of his twelve thousand soldiers at Zutphen, he had retired to Ghent, and there he passed two or three months, quarrelling with the towns-people and with his own troops. The former resented his imperious bearing, and the latter complained of not receiving their pay. It would have been well if Casimir, always in want of money, had given heed in time to the Landgrave William's warning, that it were better to have thirty thousand devils at one's back than thirty thousand German troops with no money to give them, it being possible to pay the devils with the sign of the cross, while the soldiers could not be got rid of save by hard silver and hard knocks.‡ In December, the Prince of

* Nichols, vol. ii. pp. 249—263.

† Ibid., pp. 264—272.

‡ Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, vol. iii. pp. 385, 386.

Orange went to Ghent to expostulate with him and to repair the harm which his presence had helped to produce. At about the same time Queen Elizabeth wrote a very severe letter, upbraiding him for his folly and recklessness. But her anger was not very lasting. Casimir had warm friends and admirers in England, Sidney and Leicester and Walsingham especially, who believed in his genius and who helped to keep him in favour. To the Queen's reproof he replied by coming over, as soon as he could, partly to excuse and partly to justify himself, and he was favourably received.

With him came Hubert Languet, chiefly, as it appears, for the sake of meeting with Sidney. The poor old man was afraid that he should be deprived of this pleasure; for early in December he had been seized with fever and some sort of eye-disease which hindered him from reading or doing work of any kind. "But I will try all that I can," he wrote on the 13th of January, "even if it should be at the peril of my life." * Fortunately he recovered in time enough to accompany the Prince, and the two, with their attendants, reached London on Thursday the 22nd of the month, having been met on the way to Canterbury and escorted thence by Sir Henry Sidney. †

At seven o'clock in the evening they landed at the Tower, where they were very honourably received by a number of noblemen and gentlemen, by Mr. Philip Sidney among the rest, and led by torch-light to Sir Thomas

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 213.

† State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1.

Gresham's house in Bishopsgate Street. There a band of drums and fifes and other musical instruments sounded for them a hearty welcome. The next two days were spent in the City. In the splendid merchant's house Casimir was lodged and feasted, and by the Londoners he was treated with all possible honour. The corporation presented to him a chain and some plate worth two thousand crowns. *

On Sunday, the 25th of January, he took boat to Westminster and waited upon the Queen. As he entered the Palace, Her Majesty came out and essayed to kiss him. But he, as we are told, not trained to the English custom, humbly yet resolutely refused. Nor was this his only resistance to Elizabeth's friendly conduct. She led him with her own hand through the great hall into the presence chamber, and, as the passages were draughty on that cold day, she bade him put on his hat. This he would not do, saying that in all things he was Her Majesty's servant to command. "Then," replied the Queen, "if you are my servant to command, I request that you will put on your hat." He still persisted, however, showing how he was bound to serve Her Majesty in all things saving in such as were to his own reproach; but that it would be a very disgraceful thing for him to cover his head in the presence of so gracious a mistress.† Then, all needful compliments being paid, he proceeded to talk

* Nichols, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, vol. ii. pp. 277, 278.

† See a letter from Mr. Broughton to Mr. Bagot, published from the Blithefield MSS. in Devereux's *Lives and Letters of the Earls of Essex*, vol. i. p. 169.

of business matters, and he seems to have explained everything to Elizabeth's satisfaction.

During the week thus begun he lodged in Somerset House, where the Queen provided food for him. Some of his days he spent in hunting at Hampton Court, and he shot one stag in Hyde Park. In these and all his other amusements we may imagine the large but unrecorded share taken by Sidney. His name is not mentioned in connection with any particular proceeding, but we know that he was foremost among the courtiers in their hospitable conduct. He must have taken part in the jousting and tilting which were performed for the Prince's pleasure on the following Sunday, the 1st of February. On Monday there was more amusement of the same sort, as well as some fighting at barriers with swords and on horseback. On Tuesday Casimir dined in the City with the Lord Mayor and Aldermen; and on Wednesday he was entertained by the Duchess of Sussex, at her house called Barbican, in Red Cross Street, while on Thursday he was amused at the Steelyard. On the third Sunday, the 8th of February, he again visited the Queen, who, at Whitehall, initiated him as a Knight of the Garter. Besides all these engagements, he seems to have found time for visiting various noblemen, especially the Earl of Leicester, at Wanstead. "As he is liked here," wrote the Earl, "so he liketh his entertainment, and taketh in good part the great courtesy he findeth."*

* Nichols, vol. ii. p. 278; Devereux, vol. i. p. 170; Lodge, *Illustrations of British History* (ed. of 1796), vol. ii. p. 201.

On Thursday, the 12th of February, Casimir took leave of the Queen, who made him a parting present of two gold cups, valued at three hundred pounds a piece. "There hath been somewhat to do," wrote Gilbert Talbot to his father, the Earl of Shrewsbury, "to bring her unto it, and Mr. Secretary Walsingham bare the brunt thereof."*

To Languet, who took an unostentatious part in all these three weeks' amusements, it was a subject of great grief that he had to depart without saying farewell to Sidney. "Though I had nothing to give you but tears and sighs, I regret that those tears and sighs could not be a token to you of the greatness of my love. But it was not my fault, for our people were hastening away as if they were parting from enemies instead of friends, and I should have given great offence if I singly had resolved to be wise instead of being mad, like the rest." As it was, Languet would have been left behind, if he had not borrowed a horse from some one's servant.†

Though Philip was out of the way at the time, Languet had the company of Sir Henry Sidney, who attended the party either to Dover or to the South Foreland.‡ Between the two men a strong friendship had grown out of Languet's stay in England. The Huguenot also became warmly attached to the Countess of Pembroke, and others of the Sidney kindred. Of Philip's great

* Ibid., *passim.*

† *Languetii Epistolæ*, p. 214.

‡ Ibid., p. 215.

friends, Fulke Greville and Edward Dyer, moreover, he thought very highly. The former was now crossing the Channel with him; of the latter he said, "His friendship is like a gem added to my treasures." *

Languet learnt much from his visit. Previously he had rejoiced greatly in the favour shown by the Queen to Philip, and urged him by all means to keep a firm footing at Court; but, after his return to Belgium, his advice was very different. "I was glad," he wrote in one letter, "to see you in high favour with your Queen, and so much thought of by all your countrymen. But, to tell the truth, the habits of your Court seemed to me less manly than I could have wished. Most of the courtiers appeared to seek for applause rather by an affected courtesy, than by those virtues which are healthful to the State, and which are the chief adornments of generous minds—of high-born men. I was much grieved, therefore, and so were your other friends who were with me, because you seemed to be wasting the flower of your youth upon such things. I fear lest your noble nature should be warped, lest by habit you should be brought to take pleasure in pursuits which only weaken the mind." †

Perhaps there was some ground for Languet's fears. It is hardly conceivable that Sidney, young, handsome, and witty, notably favoured by the Queen, highly honoured by all the worthiest frequenters of the Court, and famous among the multitudes who lived far away

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 215.
‡ Ibid., p. 243.

from courtly circles, should not have found much enjoyment in his position. Of course he liked the compliments which were paid to him, and the respect in which he was held ; but he was not at all satisfied with these. Such tokens of the power which was in him only reminded him that that power was rotting for want of use. From first to last this thought was with him, and it grew stronger and more galling every day. It is the burden of many of his writings; it is constantly showing itself, or shown to be hidden, in the few letters which are extant. Languet could not hold it half as strongly, or express it a tithe as eloquently, as did Sidney himself. " Well was I," he exclaimed, in one of his pastoral poems—

" Well was I while under shade
Oaten reeds me music made,
Striving with my mates in song,
Mixing mirth our songs among.
Greater was the shepherd's treasure
Than this false, fine, courtly pleasure ;

" Where, how many creatures be,
So many puff'd in mind I see ;
Like to Juno's birds of pride,
Scarce each other can abide ;
Friends like to black swans appearing,
Sooner these than those in hearing.

" Therefore, Pan, if thou mayst be
Made to listen unto me,
Grant, I say, if silly man
May make treaty to god Pan,
That I, without thy denying,
May be still to thee relying.

"Only for my two loves' sake,
In whose love I pleasure take,
Only two do me delight
With their ever pleasing sight;
Of all men to thee retaining
Grant me with those two remaining.*

"So shall I to thee always
With my reeds sound mighty praise,
And first lamb that shall befall,
Yearly deck thine altar shall,
If thee it please to be reflected,
And I from thee not rejected." †

The two friends, at thought of whom Sidney's mind passed from grief to happiness, and on whose account he was ready to undergo the perils of a courtly life, were of course Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville. In the early part of the year 1579, Dyer appears to have been almost rivalling Sidney in his success at Court. Greville had just returned from the political errand to the Continent on which he had started in company with Casimir. Coming by way of Delft, where the Prince of Orange was lodging, he had an interview, in one respect memorable. To his visitor the Prince entrusted a message for Queen Elizabeth. He begged him to assure her of his very humble service, and to say that he craved leave of her freely to utter his knowledge and opinion of a fellow-servant of his, who lived unemployed under her. He had had much experience, he had seen various times and things

* Marked in the margin, "Sir E. D. and M. F. G."
† *Dispraise of a Courtly Life.*

and persons, but he protested that Her Majesty had in Mr. Philip Sidney one of the ripest and greatest statesmen that he knew of in all Europe. If Her Majesty would but try the young man, the Prince would stake his own credit on the issue of his friend's employment about any business, either with the allies, or with the enemies, of England.*

This high opinion, coming from so great a man as William the Silent, is of real weight, and it is fully justified by the immediate sequel. Greville, heartily pleased at the good words he had heard concerning his friend, came home and told him what he was to repeat to the Queen. But Sidney, with proper dignity, forbade him to do it, saying that if Her Majesty did not and could not reward him for what she herself knew, she had best not do it at all; for the commendation of another could add nothing to his real deserts.† So, for some months more, Sidney remained at Court without employment.

It was while thus residing at Court, that he wrote a long letter to his brother Robert. For the chief part of a year Robert had been on the Continent, pursuing, under the friendly eye of Languet, a course of study similar to that which Philip had followed when about as old. The letter, too valuable to be left unquoted, has no date, but it was evidently written in the year 1579.

* Fulke Greville, pp. 25—31

† Ibid., p. 32.

"My good Brother,

"You have thought it unkindness in me that I have not written oftener unto you, and have desired that I should write unto you something of my opinion touching your travel; you being persuaded my experience thereunto be something which I must needs confess, but not as you take it. For you think my experience grows from the good things I have learned, but I know the only experience which I have gotten is, to find how much I might have learned, and how much indeed I have missed for want of directing my course to the right end and by the right means. I think you have read Aristotle's *Ethics;* if you have, you know it is the beginning and foundation of all his works, the end to which every man doth and ought to bend his greatest and smallest actions. I am sure you have imprinted in your mind the scope and mark you mean by your pains to shoot at, for if you should travel but to travel, or to say you had travelled, certainly you should prove a pilgrim to no purpose. But I presume so well of you, that though a great number of us never thought in ourselves why we went, but a certain tickling humour to do as other men had done, you purpose, being a gentleman born, to furnish yourself with the knowledge of such things as may be serviceable for your country and calling; which certainly stands not in the change of air, for the warmest sun makes not a wise man,—no, nor in learning languages, although they be of serviceable use; for words are but words in whatsoever language they be,—and much less in that all of us come home full of disguisements not only of apparel, but of our countenances, as though the credit of a traveller stood all upon his outside; but in the right informing your mind with those things which are most notable in those places which you come unto.

"Of which, as the one kind is so vain, as I think ere it be long, like the mountebank in Italy, we travellers shall be made sport of in comedies, so may I justly say, who rightly travels with the eye of Ulysses doth take one of the most excellent ways of worldly wisdom. For hard sure it is to know England, without you know it by comparing it with some other country, no more than a man can know the swiftness of his horse without seeing him well matched. For you that are a logician know that, as greatness of itself is a quantity, so yet the judgment of it, as of mighty riches and all other strengths, stands in the predicament of relation; so that you cannot tell what the Queen of England is able to do defensively or offensively, but through know-

ing what they are able to do with whom she is to be matched. This, therefore, is one notable use of travellers, which stands in the mind and correlative knowledge of things; in which kind comes in the knowledge of all leagues between prince and prince; the topographical description of each country, how the one lies by situation to hurt or help the other, and how they are to the sea well harboured or not; how stored with ships; how with revenue; how with fortifications and garrisons; how the people, warlike, trained, or kept under, with many other such considerations, which as they confusedly come into my mind, so I for want of leisure hastily set them down. But these things, as I have said, are of the first kind which stands in the balancing one thing with the other.

"The other kind of knowledge is of them which stand in the things which are in themselves either simply good or simply bad, and so serve for a right instruction or a shunning example. These Homer meant in this verse, *Qui multos hominum mores cognovit et urbes:* for he doth not mean by *mores* how to look or put off one's cap with a new-found grace, although true behaviour is not to be despised;—marry, my heresy is that the English behaviour is best in England, and the Italian's in Italy. But *mores* he takes for that from whence Moral Philosophy is so called, the certainness of true discerning of men's minds both in virtue, passion, and vices. And when he saith *cognovit urbes,* he means not, if I be not deceived, to have seen towns, and marked their buildings; for surely houses are but houses in every place; they do but differ *secundum magis et minus.* But he attends to their religion, politics, laws, bringing up of children, discipline both for war and peace, and such like. These I take to be of the second kind, which are ever worthy to be known for their own sakes; as surely, in the great Turk, though we have nothing to do with him, yet his discipline in war matters is, *propter se,* worthy to be known and learned.

"Nay, even in the kingdom of China, which is almost as far as the Antipodes from us, their good laws and customs are to be learned; but to know their riches and power is of little purpose for us, since that can neither advance nor hinder us. But in our neighbour countries, both these things are to be marked, as well the latter, which contain things for themselves, as the former, which seek to know both those, and how their riches and power may be to us available, or otherwise. The countries fittest for both these are those you are going into. France is above all other most needful for us to mark, especially in the former kind; next is Spain and the Low Countries; then Ger-

many, which in my opinion excels all others as much in the latter consideration, as the other doth in the former. Yet neither are void of neither. For us, Germany, methinks, doth excel in good laws and well administering of justice ; so are we likewise to consider in it the many princes with whom we may have league, the places of trade, and means to draw both soldiers and furniture thence in time of need. So on the other side, as in France and Spain, we are principally to mark how they stand towards us both in power and inclination ; so are they not without good and fitting use, even in the generality of wisdom to be known. As in France, the Courts of Parliament, their subaltern jurisdiction, and their continual keeping of paid soldiers. In Spain, their good and grave proceedings, their keeping so many provinces under them, and by what manner, with the true points of honour ; wherein since they have the most open conceit, if they seem over-curious, it is an easy matter to cut off when a man sees the bottom. Flanders likewise, besides the neighbourhood with us, and the annexed considerations thereunto, hath divers things to be learned, especially their governing, their merchants, and other trades. Also for Italy, we know not what we have, or can have to do with them but to buy their silks and wines. And, as for the other point, except Venice, whose good laws and customs we can hardly proportion to ourselves, because they are quite of a contrary government ; there is little there but tyrannous oppression and servile yielding to them that have little or no right over them. And for the men you shall have there, although indeed some be excellently learned, yet they are all given to counterfeit learning, as a man shall learn among them more false grounds of things than in any place else that I know, for, from a tapster upwards, they are all discoursers in certain matters and qualities, as horsemanship, weapons, painting (and such are better there than in other countries) ; but as for other matters, as well, if not better, you shall have them in nearer places.

"Now resteth in my memory but this point, which indeed is the chief to you of all others ; which is the choice of what men you are to direct yourself to ; for it is certain no vessel can leave a worse taste in the liquor it contains, than a wrong teacher infects an unskilful hearer with that which hardly will ever out. I will not tell you some absurdities I have heard travellers tell. Taste him well, before you drink much of his doctrine. And when you have heard it, try well what you have heard before you hold it for a principle ; for one error is the mother of a thousand. But you may

say, 'How shall I get excellent men to take pains to speak with me?' Truly, in few words, either by much expense, or much humbleness."*

In that letter there is evidence that the fascinations of a courtly life and the bad influence of the royal smile, ruinous to so many men of noble promise, were in no measure depriving Philip Sidney of his natural manliness and intellectual vigour.

* *Instructions for Travellers*, by Robert Earl of Essex, Sir Philip Sidney, and Secretary Davison (1633).

CHAPTER VIII.

LITERARY BEGINNINGS.

1578—1579.

At the time of Sidney's birth, a new period of English literature may be almost said to have commenced. Spenser and Raleigh, Lyly and Hooker, were born one or two years earlier; Peele and Chapman two or three years later. Francis Bacon was Philip's junior by six years, Christopher Marlowe by nine, and William Shakespeare by ten. All were children together, while society was witnessing the first crude evidence of that literary vigour which, perfected in them, was to make the age of Queen Elizabeth unrivalled in the history of intellectual energy. Sidney was two years old when the poems of Wyatt and Surrey, written long before, but then first published, set the fashion both of sonnet-making and of composition in blank-verse. He was four, when *The Mirror of Magistrates*, famous chiefly for Thomas Sackville's share in it, offered an example of the skilful writing of narrative poetry with which allegory was blended. He was seven, when the same Sackville gave its first offspring to English tragedy, by the performance before Queen Elizabeth of his and Norton's play of *Ferrex and Porrex*, afterwards called *Gorboduc*. He

was eight or nine when *The Schoolmaster* was written by Roger Ascham, his mother's friend and tutor.

The years before and after the appearance of that model treatise, are notable for their richness in able works on learned themes, and it is to this class of literature that Philip seems to have given most heed in his youth. When he was fourteen Ascham died. But Ascham, living in his books and in the memory of friends, was the young man's guide, both in the subjects and in the method of his study. Zealously applying himself to the learning of languages, Sidney valued them, not for their own sakes, but as needful stages to a proper understanding of philosophy and history. History he read, and enjoined his brother Robert to read, according to the plan indicated by the author of *The Schoolmaster*—"marking diligently the causes, counsels, acts, and issues in all great attempts; in causes, what is just or unjust; in counsels, what is purposed wisely or rashly; in acts, what is done courageously or faintly; and of every issue noting some general lesson of wisdom and wariness for like matters in time to come." * And in pursuing philosophy, he followed the ways of the same wise teacher, caring little for Duns Scotus, "with all the rabble of barbarous questionists," as Ascham had termed them, and mainly fixing his attention upon Plato and Aristotle. Declaring himself willing to learn Greek, if only for the sake of studying Aristotle's writings in Aristotle's words, he yet felt sympathy for the new Platonism,

* Ascham, *Report on the State of Germany.*

and the stout arguments against Aristotelian doctrine, urged by Ramus. Ramus was one of the victims of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, and it is even possible that Philip met him in Paris. When three years later Banosius, a prominent theologian and philosopher of the day, translated his friend's *Commentaries*, and prefixed to them a life of the martyr, he promised a first copy of the book to Sidney, then only one-and-twenty, because, he said, of his fondness for its theme, and of his ability to make it known among English scholars.*

Of these sorts, then, were Sidney's chief employments in the world of letters up to the spring of 1575, when, returning to England, he began life as a courtier. The business of the Court had too much newness and excitement for one who should persevere in abstruse studies; but, in its own way, it furnished literary suggestion. In the masques and allegorical entertainments witnessed at Kenilworth, there was rough indication of the progress of the English drama. At Kenilworth Sidney met Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, and many other courtiers who emulated the skill in writing for which Sackville was famous. There also he saw, and perhaps began a brief friendship with, George Gascoigne, a man of humbler birth, but a better poet, than any of the others. Gascoigne's pungent wit and dramatic vigour are, in our day, hardly sufficiently appreciated. He died in 1577, before reaching his fiftieth year, leaving, besides

* British Museum, *Additional MSS.*, 15,914, pp. 21, 28.

other works, a *Steel-Glass*, wherein were reflected both his own skill as a satirist and many of the vices of the time.

That book, and most others that appeared in these years, were doubtless read by Sidney. It is probable, moreover, that he ventured on many small compositions of his own, which have not survived, or of which some, being songs and sonnets with no date assigned to them, may be mixed up with those which he afterwards wrote. But his first known work was a short masque, already mentioned, prepared in honour of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Wanstead in the spring of 1578.

Of this piece, *The Lady of the May*, the literary merits are very slight. It is quite destitute of dramatic power, and its verse shows none of the writer's later sweetness. Its subject is a quarrel, in the presence of Queen Elizabeth, between Therion, the champion of the huntsmen, and Espilus, the leader of the shepherds, as to which of them shall enjoy the love of the beautiful May-lady. After long strife of words, in which the several merits of forest and of pastoral employment are discussed, the Queen's decision is obtained in favour of Espilus and the race of shepherds.

The Lady of the May contains some ridicule of the courtly ways already growing very irksome to its author, longing for purer and larger exercise—and even some well-conveyed play upon Elizabeth's taste for flattery. But the main feature of the work is its strong satire of the pedantic mode of speech then so much in use. Master Rhombus, the schoolmaster, who acts as spokesman, is prototype of Holofernes in

Love's Labour Lost. "Now the thunder-thumping Jove," is his first address to the Queen, "transfund his dotes into your excellent formosity, which have, with your resplendent beams, thus segregated the enmity of these rural animals. I am, *potentissima domina*, a schoolmaster, that is to say, a pedagogue, one not a little versed in the disciplinating of the juvenile fry, wherein, to my laud I say it, I use such geometrical proportion, as neither wanteth mansuetude nor correction; for so it is described:—

"Parcare subjectos, et debellire superbos.

"Yet hath not the pulchritude of my virtues protected me from the contaminating hands of these plebeians; for, coming *solummodo* to have parted their sanguinolent fray, they yielded me no more reverence than if I had been some *pecorius asinus*. I, even I, that am—who am I? *Dixi; verbus sapiento satum est.* But what said that Trojan Æneas when he sojourned in the surging sulks of the sandiferous seas?

"Hæc olim memonasse juvebit.

"Well, well; *ad propositos revertebo.* The purity of the verity is, that a certain *pulchra puella profectò*, elected and constituted, by the integrated determination of all this topographical region, as the sovereign lady of this Dame Maia's month, hath been *quodammodo* hunted, as you would say, pursued, by two, a brace, a couple, a cast of young men, to whom the crafty coward Cupid had, *inquam*, delivered his dire, dolorous dart."

That single quotation is enough to show what Sidney thought of the affected pedantry of the day. His imitation, indeed, was hardly exaggerated. In the written and even spoken language of those who pretended to be the cleverest and wittiest, there was almost as much distortion of word and phrase. If the better sort made their far-fetched quotations from foreign writers grammatically, there were not a few ready to display ignorance, as great as that of Rhombus, of the languages they professed to know. Among educated and uneducated alike there was the same taste for large, loud-sounding and empty words, the same foolish redundance of alliteration. There is illustration of all this in the somewhat later writings of Lyly, Greene, and others; but in them, the practices, though sufficiently absurd, seem to have been softened down from the still greater absurdities prevalent in the days of Sidney's youth, and, fortunately, very scantily preserved. When Hubert Languet visited London in the beginning of 1579, he noticed with surprise, almost with disgust, the affected speech and bearing of nearly every courtier. More than twenty years before, in 1554, Sidney's wise friend, Thomas Wilson, some time Dean of Durham, and subsequently joint Secretary of State with Sir Francis Walsingham, had made a memorable complaint in his *Arte of Rhetorique*, almost the first piece of criticism which our language contains. "Some seek so far for outlandish English," he said, "that they forget altogether their mothers' language. And I dare swear this, if some of their mothers were alive, they were not able to tell what they say; and yet these fine

English clerks will say they speak in their mother tongue, if a man should charge them with counterfeiting the King's English. Some far-journeyed gentlemen, at their return home, like as they love to go in foreign apparel, so they will ponder their talk with over-sea language. He that cometh lately out of France will talk French-English, and never blush at the matter. Another chops in with English Italianated, and applieth the Italian phrase to our English speaking. . . . . The fine courtier will talk nothing but Chaucer. The mystical wise men and poetical clerks will speak nothing but quaint proverbs and blind allegories, delighting much in their own darkness, especially when none can tell what they do say. The unlearned, or foolish fantastical, that smells but of learning, such fellows as have seen learned men in their days, will so Latin their tongues that the simple cannot but wonder at their talk, and think surely they speak by some revelation. I know them that think rhetoric to stand wholly upon dark words; and he that can catch an inkhorn term by the tail, him they count a fine Englishman and a good rhetorician."*

Sidney, as appears chiefly in some parts of his *Arcadia*, was not wholly free from the pernicious fashion of the day; but he strove zealously against it, and the evidence of the strife, given in *The Lady of*

* It was Wilson who strung together this caricature of the fashionable alliteration of his day: "Pitiful poverty prayeth for a penny, but puffed presumption payeth not a point, pampering his paunch with pestilent pleasures, procuring his passport to post it to hell-pit, there to be punished with pain perpetual."

the May, inclines us to look leniently upon the literary faults of the work. He had no talent for dramatic writing; least of all was he able to write a play full of extravagant praise of the Queen, to whose vanity he had no inclination to pander, although glad to honour all that was good in her character.

The masque was acted in May of 1578. In the following July, Sidney, accompanying the Court to Audley End, became the hero of a laudatory poem, composed by Gabriel Harvey,* a native of Saffron

* Gabrielis Harueij *Gratulationum Valdinensium Libri Quatuor* (Londini, anno 1578, mense Septembri), lib. iv. Part III. *Ad Nobilissimum, Humanissimúmque Iuuenem, Philippum Sidneivm, mihi multis nominibus longè charissimum.* For the sake of its personal allusions to Sidney, and its evidence of the high place which he already held in the esteem of learned men, the first part of the address is worth quoting :—

"Tené ego, te solum taceam, Præclare Philippe,
Quemque aliæ gentes, quemque ora externa loquuntur ?
Non faciam, non si cerebrum mihi Pallas obumbret,
Non sensus, mihi si Phœbus contundat acutos,
Et siluisse aliquando velit, qui multa locutus
Tandem etiam à musis, et Apolline deseror omni.
Si nihil est, laudabo genus ; laudabo Mineruam ;
Laudabo ingenium ; mores laudabo venustos ;
Ingenuas laudabo artes ; dicamque, Minerua
Propitia puerum didicisse fideliter illas.
Ecquis cum minùs optatum, gratumque venire
Crediderit cuiquam ; qui talibus ornamentis
Venerit excultus, talique incedet amictu ?
At tua sunt privata magis Præconia : Te, te
Gallica nobilitas ; te, te Germanica valde
Admirata fuit ; te, te nouus induperator
Mirificè coluit (celebris Legatio multum
Addiderat decoris) ; tam forti pectore, tanto
Indicio, tam spectata virtute refertum,

Waldon, and a life-long student at Cambridge, where he was famous as a teacher of classical and theological literature. Harvey was on terms of intimacy with Languet, Henry Stephens, and other continental scholars. I infer that it was one of these men who introduced him to Sidney, and that the acquaintance began in this summer of 1578. Well worth knowing for his own strength of mind and goodness of heart, Harvey never did better service to Sidney than in making him the friend of his sometime pupil and life-long associate, Edmund Spenser.

Tot literis Iuuenem : Stephanus tibi multa trophæa
Ingenii statuit ; Languetus plura ; sed vnus
Plurima Banosius, niueo signanda lapillo ;
Banosius, pars magna animi, bona portio nostri.
Quid mirum, si te stupeat Britannica pubes ;
Aula probet ; faueat Princeps ; utrunque Lycæum
Delitias inter foueat ; Respublica tota
Amplectatur, amet, miretur, laude celêbret ?
Sic superi voluêre ; boni, nimiumque benigni
Sic superi voluêre ; Anglis miracula semper
Esse aliqua, in quibus emineat virtusque, fidesque,
Relligioque, artesque omnes, cunctique lepores :
In quibus ipsæ habitent musæ, dominetur Apollo ;
Et charites, venerésque insint ; regnétque Minerua,
Mercuriúsque suas vires, Pandora suásque
Exerat ; atque Themis, Facundiáque ipsa, boníque
Quotquot ubique adsunt, Genii sua numera iactent.
Quos digitis monstret populus ; dignósque triumphis
Tergeminis statuat ; sertisque, et honoribus ornet
Omnigenis, summumque adeo super æthera tollat.
Hos inter, siquis primas, memorande Philippe,
Attribuat tibi, cui superi bona cuncta dedêre
Corporis, ingenii, naturæ, fortunæque ;
Næ præclarè illum facere, ac sentire putabo,
Indicióque eius nitetur nostra Thalia.

Spenser was now about twenty-five years old. A native of East Smithfield, he had spent seven years at Cambridge, studying all the learning of the day, and training himself especially in the composition of poetry. In June, 1576, he took his master's degree, and soon afterwards, having to earn his living, he went to the north of England, as tutor in a friend's family. While thus employed, he fell in love, and grief at his mistress's cruel sport with his affection, we are told,

Fortunata Domus, cui talia pignora ; fœlix
Et Pater, et Mater, Sidneiorumque propago
Integra ; ter fœlix, ter fœlicissimus ipse,
Quique domum, patremque ornas, matremque, genusque.
Sic florens, SIDNEIE, diu : tua gloria crescat
Quotidiè magis, atque magis : præconia semper
Vel noua, vel maiora tibi cumulentur : honores
Accidant insperati : spes altra voceris
SIDNEII decoris ; spes altera Varuiciani
Nominis (ô viuat, sed viuat Auunculus) ; altra
Leicestri quoque splendoris (sed Auunculus, ô sed
Viuat in æternum) ; Præclare Philippe, voceris.
Teque omnes reputent Sidneii, Dudleioque
Stemmate, gente, domo, decore, amplitudine dignum.
Principiis nihil est illustrius ; vltima primis
Si paria exstiterint (sed erunt æqualia ; Phœbus
Maiora, inquit, erunt ; spondetque amplissima quæque
Veridicus Vates) ; Deus, ô Deus optime, quantum
Fulgorem adjicies patriis Laribúsque, domoque ;
Nobilitati etiam, maiestatique Britannæ ?
Quæ mea de tantis spes est ter maxima spebus.
Crede mihi, tua me sic afficit inclyta virtus,
Ut quiduis sperare queam, præter omnia summa.
O voti compos fiam, Sidneiaque ubique
Laus volitet, celsumque feratur ad æthera sursum
Plura aliàs : nunc musa iubet defessa tacere :
Χαῖρε aliis dixi : tibi dico χαῖρε, Valéque."

Lib. iv. pp. 15—17.

led him to write *The Shepheard's Calender*. But he was too earnest a man to be satisfied with writing a mere love-poem. As the work progressed, love was almost forgotten, and the verse became a means of high moral and religious teaching. Of this change it is probable that Sidney was in some measure and indirectly the cause.

Within a month or two of his meeting with Philip at Saffron Waldon, we find Harvey recommending Spenser to quit the barren north, and seek his fortunes in the more fruitful south; and when next we meet the poet he is at Penshurst, on intimate terms with its inmates. There can be no doubt that Harvey had sent him to Sidney, and that Sidney, in quick, warm friendship, had invited him to stay at the family mansion, whither, though chiefly residing at Court, he often came on one errand or another.

The friendship was very memorable. From it there ensued to Spenser large help in the exercise of his genius, and a chief part of the slight worldly advancement that came to him. It furnished Sidney with a very strong inducement to devote himself to letters more heartily than he had ever done before, and provided him with the best possible counsellor and fellow-student.

The Shepheard's Calender was completed during the early months of 1579, and published anonymously in April, with dedication to "the noble and virtuous gentleman, most worthy of all titles, both of learning and chivalry, Master Philip Sidney :—

"Go, little book! thyself present,
As child whose parent is unkent,
To him that is the president
Of nobleness and chivalry;
And if that envy bark at thee,
As sure it will, for succour flee
Under the shadow of his wing;
And, asked who thee forth did bring,
A shepherd's swain, say, did thee sing,
All as his straying flock he fed;
And when his honour has thee read,
Crave pardon for thy hardihead."

That was the first public avowal of Spenser's debt to Sidney as his patron. The first fruit of their literary friendship is worth noting. In company with Gabriel Harvey, Edward Dyer, Fulke Greville, and others of Sidney's courtly friends, they established a sort of club —an Areopagus, as Spenser called it *—intended for the formation of a new school of poetry. From the fragments of information extant, it is not possible to arrive at a full knowledge of its object and method, but what we do know is very curious. Sidney appears to have been its president, while Spenser, still young and inexperienced, was most vigorous in the enforcement of its rules, and Harvey, an older man than the others, gave counsel and encouragement by letter. "I like your *Dreams* passingly well," he said, in one communication to Spenser, respecting some verses not now extant; "the rather because they savour of that singular and extraordinary vein and invention which I

* Haslewood, *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesie*, (1818), vol. ii. p. 288.

ever fancied most, and in a manner admired only, in Lucian, Petrarch, Aretino, and all the most delicate and fine-conceited Grecians and Italians (for the Romans, to speak of, are but very ciphers in this kind), whose chief endeavour and drift was to have nothing vulgar, but, in some respect or other, and especially in lively hyperbolical amplifications, rare, quaint, and odd in every point; and, as a man would say, a degree or two at the least above the reach and compass of a common scholar's capacity. In which respect, notwithstanding, as well for the regularity as the divinity of the matter, I heard once a divine prefer Saint John's Revelation before all the veriest metaphysical visions and jolliest conceited dreams or ecstacies that ever were devised by one or other, how admirable or superexcellent soever they seemed otherwise to the world. And truly I am so confirmed in this opinion, that when I bethink me of the very notablest and most wonderful prophetical or poetical vision that ever I read or heard, me seemeth the proportion is so unequal that there hardly appeareth any semblance of comparison; no more in a manner, specially for poets, than doth between the incomprehensible wisdom of God and the sensible wit of man." *

The making it a rule to seek the most rare, quaint, and odd hyperbolical amplifications, as far as possible above the understanding of even ordinary scholars, much more of common folk, was not a very commendable undertaking. But this was not enough. Speaking

* Haslewood, vol. ii. p. 275.

of Sidney and Dyer, Spenser said in a letter which he wrote to Harvey, on the 16th of October, 1579, "and now they have proclaimed in their ἀρειωπαγῷ a general surceasing and silence of bald rhymers, and also of the very best, too; instead whereof they have, by authority of their whole senate, prescribed certain laws and rules of quantities of English syllables for English verse." *

In this unwise proceeding, Harvey claimed to be the leader. Long before, he had besought Spenser to abandon cumbrous rhyme, for pure classical rhythm, and he had written some *Satirical Verses*, which, we are told, had won the great good-liking and estimation of Edward Dyer, and inclined Spenser to write a long poem in the same measure.† The rules for versification appear to have been compiled by Sidney, on the basis of some already laid down by Drant, and then to have been collated with certain original ones of Harvey's preparation.‡ In clearly defined and rigidly pursued ways, the various classical metres were adopted with some modifications, and often with a steady observance of the law of incomprehensibility. Thus Sidney set a shepherd to make love in hexameters :—

"Lady, reserved by the heavens to do pastor's company honour,
Joining your sweet voice to the rural muse of a desert,
Here you fully do find the strange operation of love,
How to the woods love runs, as well as rides to the palace;
Neither he bears reverence to a prince nor pity to a beggar,
But, like a point in the midst of a circle, is still of a nearness,
All to a lesson he draws; neither hills nor caves can avoid him."§

* Ibid. p. 288.
† Ibid. p. 261.
‡ Ibid. p. 260.
§ *Arcadia* (ed. of 1655), p. 79.

And in this way Nash tells us that Harvey "came very short but yet sharp upon my Lord of Oxford, in a rattling bundle of English hexameters":—

"Strait to the back, like a shirt; and close to the breech like a diveling;
A little apish hat, couched fast to the pate, like an oyster;
French cambric ruffs, deep with a witness, starched to the purpose:
Delicate in speech; quaint in array; conceited in all points;
In courtly guiles, a passing singular odd man." *

After this fashion, moreover, Spenser shaped a lover's woes in iambics:—

"Unhappy verse! the witness of my unhappy state,
Make thyself fluttering wings of thy fast flying
Thought, and fly forth unto my love wheresoever she be,

"Whether lying restless on heavy bed, or else
Sitting so cheerless at the cheerful board, or else
Playing alone, careless, on her heavenly virginals.

"If in bed, tell her that my eyes can take no rest;
If at board, tell her that my mouth can eat no meat;
If at her virginals, tell her I can bear no mirth.

"Tell her that her pleasures were wont to lull me asleep;
Tell her that her beauty was wont to feed mine eyes;
Tell her that her sweet tongue was wont to make me mirth.

"Now do I nightly waste, wanting my kindly rest;
Now do I daily starve, wanting my lively food;
Now do I always die, wanting my timely mirth." †

To Sidney's shepherd, again, sapphic verses of this sort were addressed:

"If mine eyes can speak to do hearty errand,
Or mine eyes' language she do hap to judge of,
So that eyes' message be of her received,
Hope we do yet live.

* Haslewood, vol. ii. p. 269.
† Ibid. pp. 289, 290.

" But if eyes fail then, when I most do need them,
Or if eyes' language be not unto her known,
So that eyes' message do return rejected,
Hope we do both die.
" Yet dying and dead, do we pay her honour ;
So becomes our tomb a monument of her praise ;
So becomes our loss the triumph of her gain.
Hers be the glory,
" If the spheres senseless do yet hold a music,
If the swan's sweet voice be not heard but at death,
If the mute timber, when it hath the life lost,
Yieldeth a lute's tune." *

But I have quoted enough in illustration of the strange freak which, through love of novelty, was indulged in by so many sensible men, especially by a critic so discriminating as Sidney, and a poet so exquisite as Spenser. Even a far weaker man than Nash might have told them, that though the hexameter verse, or any other classical measure, " be a gentleman of an ancient house, yet this clime of ours he cannot thrive in. Our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in. He goes twitching and hopping in our language like a man running upon quagmires, up the hill in one syllable and down the dale in another ; retaining no part of that stately, smooth gait, which he vaunts himself with amongst the Greeks and Latins." † Sidney and Spenser, indeed, found out, before Nash had time to tell them, that such productions stumbled, according to Spenser's phrase, " either like a lame gosling that draweth one leg after, or like a lame dog that holdeth one leg up." But many others of the school were not so prompt in

* *Arcadia*, p. 78.
† Todd, *Account of Spenser*, p. xviii.

discerning their mistake. When Gabriel Harvey saw that his especial friend was turning from this idle exercise, to work out the noblest of all poetical allegories, he wrote, "If so be the *Faerie Queene* be fairer in your eye than the *Nine Muses*, and Hobgoblin run away with the garland from Apollo, mark what I say—and yet I will not say that I thought; but there, an end for this once, and fare you well till God or some good angel put you in *a better mind.*"* Yet even this crabbed critic in time conceded his point, and acknowledged that his friend's choice of style was a right one.

Of Sidney's connection with the Areopagus we hear nothing after the autumn of 1579, although there is token, in some of the poems inserted in *The Arcadia*, that his mistaken views about versification were not entirely lost even two years later. As a poet, he never, save in one or two short pieces, rose to very great excellence. In the world of letters, he is chiefly to be praised for the vigour and beauty of his prose-writings; and up to his twenty-ninth year, we have no trace of any longer or more ambitious composition than the letters and official documents of which we have read some passages. He was still a courtier rather than an author, and presently there arose court-troubles sufficient to engage all his whole thoughts for some time to come.

* Haslewood, vol. ii. p. 276.

CHAPTER IX.

UNDER THE ROYAL FROWN.

1579—1580.

In 1579 the Duke of Alençon, who, upon his brother Henry's accession to the French throne, became Duke of Anjou, renewed his suit for the hand of Queen Elizabeth. The massacre of Saint Bartholomew, which had formerly stood in his way, was now in some measure forgotten, and his recent proceedings in the Netherlands, while giving evidence to all keen-eyed men of the Duke's folly and baseness, served to dazzle careless observation. There was a party in Holland which ventured to regard him, in opposition to William of Orange, as the champion of the liberal cause, and in England some were ready to speak his praise. Of his claims, both upon Europe and upon herself, the Queen thought favourably. Early in the year, we are told his agent, Du Simiers, received such good usage, that he held conference with Her Majesty three or four times a week.* When in August he returned from a visit to his master, bringing fresh messages and requests, Du Simiers was still more kindly treated.†

* Lodge, *Illustrations* (ed. 1796), vol. ii. p. 201.

† State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. cxxxi. No. 154.

His arguments and compliments being uttered in the artful, fascinating way for which he was famous, his success seemed likely. All who objected to the match, therefore, took active measures for resisting it. And at Court the Earl of Leicester, and his nephew, Philip Sidney, were the chief opponents.

Leicester's tactics were in keeping with his character. Giving encouragement to a foolish report, that by incantations and love-potions the Queen was being drawn into the accursed union, he sought to strengthen his party; while to the Queen herself he used the most winning eloquence at his command. His arguments were made futile, however, by the French agent's discovery and exposure of Leicester's secret marriage with the Countess of Essex. To Elizabeth that intelligence was not welcome. Unwilling that the gay flatterer should marry any one, she was especially displeased that her haughty cousin, Letitia, should be his bride. She refused to listen to his persuasions against her own marriage project, or even to admit him to her presence. According to one authority, she sent him to Greenwich Castle, with orders not to stir thence without her leave; * according to another, he voluntarily shut himself up in his own abode, on pretence of being seriously ill.†

Sidney's mode of resistance differed altogether from that of his uncle. Having no personal interest in the matter—except that he, with all others of the Court,

* Camden, *Annales* (ed. 1717), p. 329.

† Fulke Greville, p. 71.

disliked the prospect of a crowding of French nobles into the Queen's presence—he rested his arguments solely upon constitutional and patriotic grounds. Between Elizabeth and her suitor, he said, there were differences of years, of person, of education, of estate, and of religion, each by itself a sufficient reason against the marriage. Nearly twenty years younger than Her Majesty, ugly and ignorant, the Duke could bring no sort of happiness to the Queen. To the State he could bring nothing but mischief. By his Jesuitical policy, and his licentious conduct, he would undermine all the battlements which its reformers had set round the English Church; "fashioning atheism among her subjects, as knowing that in confusion of thought he might more easily raise up superstitious idolatry." By misguiding public affairs, and weakening ancient customs and statutes, by lifting monarchy out of its proper legal circles, "by banishing all free spirits and faithful patriots with a kind of shadowed ostracism, till the ideas of native freedom should be utterly forgotten," he would ruin all the sturdy politics and social liberty of England. By destroying all its present relations with foreign countries, whether commercial or political, to the great aggrandizement of France, and to the evident damaging of every free state, especially of the Netherlands, he would grievously retard the welfare, not only of England, but of all the world. "Besides," says the friend who has given us a detailed report of Sidney's arguments, "in the practice of this marriage, he foresaw and prophesied that the very first breach of God's ordinance, matching herself with a prince of

adverse faith, would infallibly carry with it some piece of the rending destiny which Solomon and those other princes justly felt for having ventured to weigh the immortal wisdom in even scales with mortal conveniency or inconveniency."*

The Queen was in no mood to be pleased with such blunt utterance of loyalty. Those speeches only were acceptable to her which contained praise of the Duke of Anjou; and because the Earl of Oxford, belonging to no party, and having no principles save one of self-advancement, was loudest in his adulation, he rose just now to a very high place in the royal favour. Sidney had never been on friendly terms with the Earl. He heartily disliked his foppery, arrogance, and villainy;

* Fulke Greville, *Life*, pp. 53—71. Far away from the Court the matter was also talked of very earnestly, and doubtless much more freely than was possible in the neighbourhood of the palace. The temper of multitudes was expressed in a pamphlet which appeared about the 1st of September, with the title "*The Discovery of the Gaping Gulf, whereinto England is like to be swallowed, by a French marriage, if the Lord forbid not the Banns, by letting Her Majesty see the Sin and Punishment thereof.*" Such plain-spoken opinion was by no means to the Queen's taste. On the 7th of September a Proclamation was issued, forbidding the sale of the "lewd and seditious book," and calling in all the copies already purchased.† Its Puritan author, Stubbs, a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and its printer, Page, were apprehended and prosecuted by royal order. Each was condemned to lose his right hand. Stubbs, who first received punishment, as soon as it was over, took off his hat with the hand remaining to him, and waving it over his head, shouted, "God save the Queen!" Page, immediately that his sentence had been executed, pointed with his left hand to its bleeding fellow upon the ground and exclaimed, "There lies the hand of a true Englishman!"

† State Paper Office MSS. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. cxxxii. No. 11.

and by his present line of conduct he was especially aggrieved. When an occasion arose by which he could avow his indignation, and break the slender intercourse which, as fellow-courtiers, had hitherto been observed between them, he seems to have been well pleased.

This happened near the end of September.* Sidney, it seems, was one day playing at tennis, when the Earl entered the place, and haughtily, as he thought became one who was great by birth, greater by alliance, and greatest by his present possession of the Queen's good-will, claimed to share in the game. Sidney, not liking that mode of address, at first took no notice of the intrusion. When he did speak, it was only to use such dignified words—"coming," we are told, "from an understanding that knew what was due to itself and what it owed to others,"—that his rival felt himself reproved, and was proportionately enraged. After further talk, rough and impertinent, he so far forgot himself as to command the whole party of players to leave the tennis court. Sidney bluntly refused. "Had his Lordship chosen," he said, "to express himself in courteous terms, he would have been met with courtesy, but he would find that they were not the men to be moved by any scourge of his fury." "Puppy!" exclaimed the Earl so angrily and loudly that the courtiers outside, having already heard something of the dispute, rushed in to witness it. Among them came Du Simiers and the French Commissioners, with whom Oxford was especially intimate. Philip, seeing

* *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 238.

that he was virtually placed in opposition, not so much to one conceited man as to a great faction in the Court, determined bravely to fight out the battle. In the firm deliberate tone which he had used throughout, though now with rising anger, he asked the Earl what he had just called him. "A puppy!" repeated Oxford. "That," said Sidney, "is a lie!" He listened for the only answer which a man of honour then could make; but none came. He therefore walked out of the court, saying, as he went, that this was a business which had better be decided in a more private place. Oxford did not follow him. To the astonishment of all but his closest partizans, and with no advantage to his reputation, he blustered forth something about having gained his point in being rid of the fellow, and thereupon proceeded to his game of tennis.

For a whole day Sidney waited for the message which he expected and desired. None arriving, he sent a gentleman to ask whether he should hear from the Earl, and to say that this was a state of affairs in which his Lordship's French companions could teach him, if he did not know, what was the only honourable thing for him to do. Thus provoked, Oxford sent back the challenge. But the time for fighting was over. The matter had been brought before the Lords of the Council; and they, not content with enjoining peace between the young men, besought the Queen herself to effect a reconciliation.

Elizabeth, loth to find fault with the courtier whom, notwithstanding his boldness towards her, she yet heartily admired, but determined to shelter the reigning

favourite, sent for Sidney, and urged him to apologize. She pointed out the difference in degree between earls and gentlemen, and talked much about the respect which inferiors owed to their superiors, and the risk, if the gentry used boldness with the nobility, that the peasantry would lay insult upon both.

Sidney's answer was respectful and dignified. A peerage, he said, was never intended to be a privilege to do wrong—witness the Queen herself, who, however queenly she might be by office, birth, education, and nature, was content to follow the same line of conduct as that of her subjects, and to secure all her rights by obeying their laws. He reminded her that though the Earl of Oxford was a great lord by his own family and her good favour, yet he was no lord over him. King Henry the Eighth, he added, had given to the gentry the right of free and unreserved appeal against the overbearing spirit of the grandees, thinking it necessary to the welfare of the State that the humbler part of the nation should keep down those whose rank inclined them to be pompous and presumptuous.*

Not even the Queen's arguments could induce Sidney to remove one step from what he felt to be the only dignified ground. But, as his rival chose, in a cowardly way, to hide himself under Elizabeth's favour, he could do nothing. He had fully established his own credit by publicly resenting the insult that had been put upon him, by challenging the Earl to clear himself, and by

* Fulke Greville, *Life*, pp. 74—81.

maintaining, before the Queen, his right to such straightforward conduct.

The quarrel, however, did not end there. Not liking the contempt which he had brought upon himself, yet not brave enough to win back the world's esteem, either by courtly defiance, or by manly apology, the Earl of Oxford is said to have hit upon a characteristic mode of retaliation, one which he considered to be "a safe course." If we may trust reports which we have from Philip, Earl of Arundel, his brother, Lord Henry Howard, and some other members of the party opposed to Oxford, he planned the secret murder of his antagonist. After much delay, he sent a messenger to Sidney, asking that their disagreement might be honourably ended, and received a very glad assent to the proposal. Thereby suspicion was removed from him, and opportunity given for a treacherous project. Under cover of the night he was to visit Sidney's residence, probably the house at Paul's Wharf, there to kill him, as he lay asleep in bed, and then to make his own escape by a barge which was to be in waiting.* The story, openly told within two years of the alleged occurrence, is so remarkable, that I hesitate to accept it, although, both in its wildness and in its wickedness, it sorts well with known instances of the Earl of Oxford's villainy. If planned, however, the scheme was not sufficiently "safe" to be acted upon. Sidney lived to do noble work for his country.

* State Paper Office, MSS. *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. cli. Nos. 45 and 57.

By reason of its political associations, this dispute of Sidney's, insignificant in itself, appears to have acquired an European notoriety. Languet heard of it from various sources,* and he wrote to tell of the very great pain which it caused him. "I know," he said, "that by a habit inveterate in all Christendom, a man of honour is disgraced if he resent not an injury of this sort; but I think it very unfortunate, although no blame can be set upon you, that you were led into this quarrel. No true glory can come of it, even if it give you room to display your courage. A virtue like yours needs a different theatre to play upon."† Prince Casimir sent to offer all the assistance in his power, towards bringing the dispute to a safe ending.‡

Sidney's conduct was considered to be not so much a bearding of Oxford, as a defiance of the whole French party, of which Oxford was a leader. In that light he himself regarded it.

From this time we see him taking bolder ground than he had held before with reference to the Queen's projected marriage. It was really dangerous ground. He could not hope to retain much of the Queen's favour if in such a matter he persisted in thwarting her. She forgave him for his plain speech about Oxford, but she could not fail to be displeased if he spoke as plainly about herself. Although so far satisfied with his conduct as to accept from him, on the first day of 1580, a present

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 238, 242.
† Ibid., p. 239.
‡ Ibid., p. 242.

of a crystal cup,* it is clear that Her Majesty was growing angry. The royal smile, under which Sidney had been constrained to live listlessly for more than two years, was now giving place to a frown which, notwithstanding all its attendant disasters, helped him to enter upon a new and very noble field of work.

The immediate cause of this change was a letter written by Sidney to Queen Elizabeth, just before or just after the beginning of the new year. In conversation with her he had already, in general terms and at odd times, specified some of his reasons for opposing her alliance with Anjou; but now he determined to sit down and prepare a final and complete protest against it. He did this, however, not solely on his own responsibility. He was instructed, we are told, by those whom he was bound to obey,† probably by his father, his friend Walsingham, and others who knew his great skill in writing, and who trusted much to the force of his arguments. To have taken such a step without advice would have been, as Languet rightly said, inconsistent with his natural modesty;‡ but we may believe that, when urged to do the perilous work, he very readily undertook it. This he felt to be a cause in which he could not hold back; and, wearied of his long-constrained courtly idleness, he was doubtless eager to do anything in which he could feel that he was labouring for an end really worth struggling after. Be this as it may, he penned a long and elaborate document,

* Nichols, *Royal Progresses*, vol. ii. p. 290.

† *Languети Epistolæ*, p. 285.

‡ Ibid., p. 284.

hardly more indicative of his brave and honest thought than of his great skill in writing. It opened thus :—

"MOST FEARED AND BELOVED, MOST SWEET AND GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

"To seek out excuses of this my boldness, and to arm the acknowledging of a fault with reasons for it, might better show I knew I did amiss than any way diminish the attempt,—especially in your judgment, who being able to discern lively into the nature of the thing done, it were folly to hope, by laying on better colours, to make it more acceptable. Therefore, carrying no other olive branch of intercession than the laying of myself at your feet, nor no other insinuation either for attention or for pardon, but the true vowed sacrifice of unfeigned love, I will, in simple direct terms (as hoping they shall only come to your merciful eyes), set down the overflowing of my mind in this important matter, importing, as I think, the continuance of your safety, and, as I know, the joys of my life."

Of the proposed marriage, Sidney proceeded to say that the good and evil that would come by it must be considered both in relation to the Queen's estate and to her person.

As for her estate, what could be better than that which she enjoyed at present, in being an absolute Princess, ruling over a prosperous kingdom? And though now there was healthy national life, yet the state was so situated that any violent and sudden change, such as this marriage would bring about, could not but be attended with great hazard.

"Your inward force consisteth in your subjects, generally unexpert in warlike defence. And as they are divided now into mighty factions (and factions bound on the never-dying knot of religion), with one of them,—to whom your happy government hath granted the free exercise of the eternal truth; with this, by the continuance of time, by the multitude of them, by the principal offices and strength they hold,

and, lastly, by your dealings both at home and abroad against the adverse party,—your state is so entrapped as it were impossible for you, without excessive trouble, to pull yourself out of the party so long maintained. For such a course, once taken in hand, is not much unlike a ship in a tempest, which however dangerously soever it may be beaten with waves, yet is there no safety or succour without it. These [Protestants], therefore, as their souls live by your happy government, so are they your chief, if not your sole, strength. . . . . How their hearts will be galled, if not aliened, when they shall see you take a husband a Frenchman and a Papist, in whom (howsoever fine wits may find farther dealings or painted excuses) the very common people will know this, that he is the son of a Jezebel of our age,*—that his brother made oblation of his own sister's marriage, the easier to make massacres of our brethren in belief—that he himself, contrary to his promise and all gratefulness, having his liberty and principal estate by the Huguenots' means, did sack La Charité,† and utterly spoil them with fire and sword! This, I say, even at first sight, gives occasion to all truly religious to abhor such a master, and consequently to diminish much of the hopeful love they have long held to you.

"The other faction, most rightly indeed to be called a faction, is the Papists; men whose spirits are full of anguish, some being infected by others whom they accounted damnable, some having their ambition stopped because they are not in the way of advancement, some in prison and disgrace, some whose best friends are banished practisers, many thinking you are an usurper, many thinking also you had disannulled your right because of the Pope's excommunication, all burthened with the weight of their conscience; men of great numbers, of great riches, because the affairs of State have not lain on them; of united minds, as all men that deem themselves oppressed naturally are. With these I would willingly join all discontented persons, such as want and disgrace keep lower than they have set their hearts, such as have resolved what to look for at your hands, such as Cæsar said *quibus opus est bello civili*, and are of his mind, *Malo in acie quam in foro cadere*. These be men so much the more to be doubted, because, as they do embrace all estates, so are they commonly of the bravest and wakefullest sort and that know the advantage of the world most. This double rank of people, how their minds have stood, the northern

* The famous and infamous Catherine de'Medici.

† A Protestant town, upon the river Loire.

rebellion* and infinite other practices have well taught you; of which if it be said it did not prevail, that is true indeed, for if they had prevailed it were too late now to deliberate. But at this present they want nothing so much as a head, who in effect needs not but to receive their instructions, since they may do mischief only with his countenance. . . . If then the affectionate tide have their affections weakened, and the discontented have a gap to utter their discontent, I think it will seem an ill-preparative for the patient (I mean your estate) to a great sickness."

Then Sidney turned to speak of the Duke of Anjou, whose poisonous influence would surely breed as great a sickness in the nation as any that could be dreaded.

"Besides the French disposition and his own education, his inconstant temper against his brother, his thrusting himself into the Low Country matters, his sometimes seeking the King of Spain's daughter, sometimes your Majesty, are evident testimonies of his being carried away with every wind of hope. Taught to love greatness any way gotten, and having for the motioners and ministers of the mind only such young men as have showed they think evil contentment a ground of any rebellion, who have seen no commonwealth but in faction, and divers of which have defiled their hands in odious murders,—with such fancies and favourites, what is to be hoped for? that he will contain himself within the limits of your condition?—since, in truth, it were strange that he that cannot be contented to be the second person in France, and heir apparent, should be content to come to be a second person where he should pretend no way to sovereignty. His power, I imagine, is not to be despised, since he is come into a country where the way of evil doing will be presented unto him, where there needs nothing but a head to draw together all the ill-affected members; himself a prince of great revenues, of the most popular nation of the world, full of soldiery and such as are used to serve without pay, so as they may have show of spoil; and without question shall have his brother ready to help him, as well for old revenge, as to divert him from troubling France, and to deliver his own country from evil humours . . . . . I think I may easily conclude that your country

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* That headed by the Duke of Norfolk, who was executed in 1572.

—as well by long peace and fruits of peace, as by the poison of division, wherewith the faithful shall by this means be wounded and the contrary enabled—made fit to receive hurt, and Monsieur [that is, the Duke of Anjou] being every way likely to use the occasions to hurt, there can almost happen no worldly thing of more eminent danger to your estate royal."

The second part of Sidney's argument dealt with the personal considerations involved in the projected marriage.

"Often have I heard you, with protestation, say no private pleasure nor self-affection could lead you to it [that is, to a married life]; but if it be both unprofitable for your kingdom and unpleasant to you, certainly it were a dear purchase of repentance. Nothing can it add unto you but the bliss of children, which I confess were a most unspeakable comfort, but yet no more appertaining unto him than to any other to whom the height of all good haps were allotted, to be your husband; and, therefore, I may assuredly affirm that what good soever can follow marriage is no more his than any body's; but the evils and dangers are peculiarly annexed to his person and condition."

What were the motives to this sudden change from a love of virginity to an eagerness to be married? The Queen had adduced two—the fear of standing alone, and the danger of popular contempt; and these Sidney proceeded to discuss.

Standing alone, with good government, both in peace and in warlike defence, he declared to be the best thing possible to a well-established monarchy; those buildings being ever most durable which stand firmly on their own foundations. Undoubtedly the leaguing together of princes was at times a good thing, when either some great end had to be secured, or some great peril had to

be avoided; but in this case neither motive could with the least reason exist.

"Monsieur's desires and yours, how they shall meet in public matters, I think no oracle can tell. For, as the geometricians say that parallels, because they maintain divers lines, can never join, so truly, two, having in the beginning contrary principles, to bring forth one doctrine, must be some miracle. He, of the Romish religion, and, if he be a man, must needs have that manlike property, to desire that all men be of his mind; you, the erector and defender of the contrary, and the only sun that dazzleth their eyes: he, French and desiring to make France great; your Majesty, English and desiring nothing less than that France should not grow great; he, both by own fancy and youthful governors, embracing all ambitious hopes, having Alexander's image in his head, but perhaps evil painted; your Majesty, with excellent virtue taught what you should hope and, by no less wisdom, what you may hope, with a council renowned over all Christendom for their well-tempered minds, having set the utmost of their ambition in your favour and the study of their souls in your safety."

Elizabeth's other excuse, of the danger of popular contempt, was the last point touched upon by Sidney; and here, it must be admitted, in his capacity as courtier he was led to use terms which could hardly have been genuine. He had been addressing the Queen with unusual boldness and bluntness, and now he could not help seeking to soften her anger, almost sure to be excited, with a few honeyed words, such as she liked best of all to hear. Speaking of the scandalous stories which were occasionally started concerning her, he added:—

"I durst with my blood answer it, that there was never monarch held in more precious reckoning of her people; and, before God, how can it be otherwise? For mine own part, when I hear some lost wretch hath defiled such a name with his mouth, I consider the right name of blasphemy, whose unbridled soul doth delight to deprave

that which is accounted generally most high and holy. No, no, most excellent Lady, do not raze out the impression you have made in such a multitude of hearts, and let not the scum of such vile minds bear any witness against your subjects' devotions ; which, to proceed one point further, if it were otherwise, could little be helped, but rather nourished and in effect begun by this [marriage]. The only means of avoiding contempt are love and fear ; love, as you have by divers means sent into the depth of their souls—so, if anything can stain so true a form, it must be the trimming yourself not in your own likeness, but in new colours unto them ; their fear by him cannot be increased, without the appearance of French forces, the manifest death of your estate."

"Since then," said the brave courtier in conclusion—

"Since then it is dangerous for your state, because, by inward weakness, principally caused by division, it is fit to receive harm ; since to your person it can be no way comfortable, you not desiring marriage ; and neither to person nor estate he is to bring any more good than any body, but more evil he may : since the causes that should drive you to this are either fears of that which cannot happen, or by this means cannot be prevented ; I do with most humble heart say unto your Majesty, having essayed this dangerous help, for your standing alone, you must take it for a singular honour God hath done you, to be indeed the only protector of His Church. And yet in worldly respects your kingdom is very sufficient so to do, if you make that religion upon which you stand to carry the only strength, and have abroad those that still maintain the same course, who, as long as they may be kept from utter falling, your Majesty is sure enough from your mightiest enemies. As for this man, as long as he is but Monsieur in might and a Papist in profession, he neither can or will greatly shield you ; and, if he get once to be King, his defence will be like Ajax's shield, which rather weighed them down than defended those that bare it. Against contempt, if there be any, which I will never believe, let your excellent virtues of piety, justice, and liberality daily, if it be possible, more and more shine. Let such particular actions be found out, which be easy as I think to be done, by which you may gratify all the hearts of your people : let those in whom you find trust and to whom you have committed trust, in your weighty affairs, be held up in the eyes of your subjects : lastly, doing as you do, you shall be, as you be, the example of princes, the ornament of

this age, and the most excellent fruit of your progenitors, and the perfect mirror of your posterity.

"Your Majesty's faithful, humble, and obedient subject,

"P. SIDNEY." *

No commentary is needed to such a letter as that. Seldom has a subject entered upon a more delicate contest with his sovereign, or conducted it in a nobler and more dignified way. The merits of the document have not been overstated by the historians and critics who have alluded to it; but it certainly had not the effect commonly reported. † Elizabeth was not at all convinced by its arguments. For at least two years longer she dallied with the Duke of Anjou; and Sidney had to pay the penalty of his boldness by eight or nine months' hiding from her frown. Many feared, indeed, that he would receive a much harder punishment than the mere temporary withdrawal of the royal favour. Languet anticipated for him exile at the least. "You will hardly find safety in Flanders," he wrote,

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. pp. 287—292.

† Strype, for example, in the *Annals of the Reformation*, says :— "It contains many brief but bright sentences, showing the mature judgment of the writer, his skill in politics, his acquaintance with Roman history, his knowledge of foreign states and kingdoms and observations thence, his apprehension of the great danger from Papists, his concern for the Protestant interest abroad . . . . . So that, in short, this letter . . . . . seems to have swayed the Queen to decline this motion." Hume also observes, "Sir Philip Sidney . . . . . used the freedom to write her a letter, in which he dissuaded her from her present resolution, with an unusual elegance of expression, as well as force of reasoning." And Zouch, who ought to have known better, says that, "She broke off the negotiation, and instantly discarded the proposals of her youthful lover." (p. 181.)

"and still less in France; your religion shuts you out of Spain and Italy; so that Germany is the only place left to receive you, should you be forced to quit your country." *

For a month or two before this, indeed, Languet was anxious for his friend to leave England for the continent—partly as a measure conducive to his safety, partly for the good it would do him, as the old man judged, to shake off his courtly indolence and engage in some active work. "If Oxford's arrogance and insolence," he wrote, on the 14th of November, 1579, "have awakened you from your sleep, he will have wronged you less than they who have hitherto been so indulgent to you." † The objections formerly raised by Languet against Sidney's wish to take part in foreign strife seemed to him no longer to exist. The growing needs of the cause, and the closer alliance of England with the Low Countries, he said, would fully justify his friend's enlistment. "If your absence from home is not inconvenient to your noble father and your other kin, I think you ought to come. I do not count as an inconvenience, the grief which your absence will cause them, because of their great love for you. For I hope that you will gain experience and information, and will return to them in such high repute, that they will be glad of your absence and be proud of what you have done." ‡ Seven days later he wrote again, "I beg you to think whether it will not be

* *Languetti Epistolæ*, p. 250. † Ibid., p. 243.
‡ Ibid., pp. 243, 244.

right for you to come here and devote yourself to military work." *

On the 30th of January, 1580, Languet sent another letter to say that Philip need not be afraid of Anjou, who was not likely to be in the Netherlands before autumn. "I admire your courage," he went on to say, "in so plainly advising the Queen and your countrymen of that which is to the State's advantage. But you must be careful not to go too far, and so earn more disfavour than you can bear. Old men generally think ill of the young, whom they do not at all like to find wiser than themselves. Remember that most of those who now think with you are likely to go over to the other side as soon as they find that it is safest, and that you have done nothing to influence the Queen, but rather have grievously offended her by your opposition. I do not write this to dissuade you from the honest road which you have taken; but I want you to bear in mind that you are struggling for the good of your country, and not out of any private spite or mere love of victory. When you find that your resistance stirs up only envy and hatred, and brings no profit either to your nation, or to yourself, or to your friends, you must give way to necessity, and preserve yourself for better times. For you may be sure that time will eventually bring you occasions and means of doing service to your State. Take care, I beseech you, and let not the heat of youth drive you on too far—drive you to your own destruction." Languet wrote

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, p. 245.

much more to the same effect. He dreaded the worst —thought the effect of Sidney's recent conduct was such that he could not live honourably or safely in England; it would be much better, he urged, for him to come at once and accept a voluntary exile, in which there could be no dishonour, but rather much credit, if he used it rightly and in soldierly exercise.*

Sidney knew very well that his case was not at all so dangerous as his friend fancied; but he seems to have had some design of crossing the Channel. Languet wrote in February and again in March to advise him as to the mode of his coming, the kind of recruits he had better bring with him, and the way in which he ought to demean himself. But, like previous schemes of the same sort, this issued in nothing. It is likely that Sidney, who, in any other case, would gladly have gone to take part in the Low Country strife, did not, upon reflection, choose to quit England in the present crisis. It would look like running away from home duties and responsibilities. Every one knew that the Queen was angry with him, and if he went abroad just then it would seem to be either a cowardly seeking of his own safety, or an unpatriotic defiance of his sovereign. He resolved to stay at home; but he could not remain at Court. If on any grounds that had been convenient, his pride was too great. He therefore went down to Wilton, and there—or at any rate in that part of the country—he remained for at least seven months in strict retirement from the busy courtly world.

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, pp. 249—251.

He was at Wilton on the 25th of March, and from a short letter written on that day to Arthur Atey, the secretary of his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, we are able to infer a little of his haughty, angry mood. The letter alludes to some former correspondence which is lost :—

"Mr. Atey,

"I thank you as much as your love and my gratefulness require. Truly you do me much pleasure, which, among many things, I lay up in my mind towards you. Here are no news but that all be well, which God keep, and thee too, my honest Atey. Farewell, and assure yourself I will you exceeding well. At Wilton, this 25th March, 1580.

"Your loving friend effectually,

"Philip Sidney."*

He was at Wilton, also, on the 28th of April, when his nephew William, the first-born child of the Countess of Pembroke, was christened. For godmother, the infant, just twenty days old, had Queen Elizabeth herself, on whose behalf appeared Anne, Countess of Warwick. His great-uncles, the Earls of Warwick and Leicester, were godfathers; the former attending in person, the latter being represented by Mr. Philip Sidney.†

The Queen was willing to pay a compliment to the Countess of Pembroke, for whom, from first to last, she had a reasonable liking. But she was angry with

* State Paper Office, *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. cxxxvi. No. 74.

† Offer and Hoare, *Modern Wiltshire*, (1825), p. 119. *Languetí Epistolæ*, p. 273.

most of the family. Leicester was still out of favour and towards Sir Henry Sidney she continued to show the displeasure which had hung over him for three years past. Ever since his return from Ireland he had been busy as Lord President of Wales; and in the spring months of 1580, during which his daughter was ill and his son was residing in Wilton, he seems to have often resorted thither. Queen Elizabeth sent a message in June to say that she misliked this proceeding.* Considering the dangerous condition of the country, and the need of keeping the whole Principality in a proper state of defence, she said that Sir Henry ought to spend all his time therein. It was a paltry exhibition of ill-nature, seeing that Wilton was almost as accessible as Ludlow from nearly every part of Wales.

Nor was that all. In August, the Queen sent to censure Sir Henry Sidney again; this time for not being more zealous in hunting down the Roman Catholics of Wales, and so aiding the reformation of "the recusants and other obstinate persons in religion." "Your Lordship," wrote Walsingham, in a postscript, "had need to walk warily, for your doings are narrowly observed, and Her Majesty is apt to give ear to any that shall ill you."†

Philip, holding no office from the Crown, could not be taken to task. I imagine that, when the first chagrin was over, he found the time pass pleasantly

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 273, 274.
† Ibid., p. 276.

and profitably. In his sister Mary's company there was never lack of entertainment to him. She being, according to Spenser's pastoral—

> "The gentlest shepherdess that lives this day,
> And most resembling both in shape and spright
> Her brother dear," *

there was always deep sympathy between them.

The noblest influences that fell upon Philip's life came—unless we make exception on behalf of their mother—from Mary. The part taken by others in the making of his character is very clearly discernible. From early boyhood he had an example of sturdy honesty in the conduct of his father. The blunt Huguenot training of Languet took firm root in his mind, and mainly inclined him, we may believe, to his life-long interest in that great battle of religious freedom which he did his utmost to aid during life, and the manly furtherance of which was the occasion of his death. Teaching, not unlike Languet's, but very differently imparted, came to him from the first Earl of Essex. By Essex's rival and his own uncle, the Earl of Leicester, he was encouraged in very different pursuits. Leicester's success disposed him to walk much and gaily upon the shore of courtly favour, tempted to throw himself recklessly into the midst of it, and float wherever the waves of fortune tossed him. Another large influence, and the most baneful of all, came presently from Leicester's new step-daughter,

* Spenser, *Astrophel*, ll. 212—214.

Penelope Devereux. But in aid of all that was good about the impressions of these and all other minds upon the mind of Sidney, and in opposition to everything that was bad, was the influence of the Countess of Pembroke—

> "Urania, sister unto Astrophel,
> In whose brave mind, as in a golden coffer,
> All heavenly gifts and riches locked are,
> More rich than pearls of Ind or gold of Ophir,
> And in her sex more wonderful and rare." *

The truest and noblest women always walk through the world most noiselessly. Having endowments richer, it may be, than any of which men can boast, they know that their wealth of mind is to be applied—not as that of men are bound to use their talents, in the busy jostling world, but in the sacred privacy of home. Greater faith and patience and self-sacrifice are needed. It is harder to plod on through weary years, exerting an influence often inappreciable, and seldom duly appreciated, upon sons, brothers, and husbands, who are thereby to be fitted for their battle in the open field. Yet thus, and thus only, the intellectual and moral life of mankind is preserved and extended from generation to generation. Those women who come out of their closets, who mix in the great world's strife, and aim in any way to produce a direct and visible effect upon its progress, may do very memorable and thankworthy work; but the work is really less in its issue, and less honourable to themselves, than if they had wisely

* Spenser, *Colin Clout's Come Home Againe*, ll. 487—491.

exercised their powers in the arming of others, as only high-souled women can arm them, for the contest in which, by necessity, manly strength of limb and fixedness of purpose fight with most effect.

Of the two ways in which gifted women may influence their age, Mary, Countess of Pembroke, chose the better. Had she thought it well, she could have made far greater exhibition of her talent; but then Ben Jonson might not have written over her tomb the epitaph which all men know by heart:—

> "Underneath this sable hearse
> Lies the subject of all verse,
> Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
> Death! ere thou hast found another
> Learned, fair and good as she,
> Time shall throw a dart at thee."

Intellectually, she seems to have been fully equal to her brother; morally, perhaps, she was his superior. Ben Jonson's praise was not simply hers by a tombstone compliment: it was earned by the whole conduct of her life. In quiet, hidden works she exercised her mind and heart, and we are therefore able, at the distance of nearly three centuries, to follow them but vaguely. Yet there are many evidences of her character, and none, perhaps, is more noteworthy than the result of Sidney's seven or eight months' residence at Wilton in 1580.

He came down angry with his Queen, weary of the whole Court, and thoroughly discontented with himself. But the sisterly light which was shed upon him made

these months among the brightest and richest in his whole life. It was for the most part a studious, hard-working period, the work being either suggested or shared by his learned sister.

Now, it would appear, was begun their joint translation of *The Psalms of David*, an undertaking especially to Mary's taste. In that day, as in every day when a new literary era was being entered upon, translations from all languages were freely made. Forty years ago Surrey had rendered two books of the *Æneid* into the earliest English blank verse, and both he and Wyatt had translated some of the *Psalms*. In 1555 and the following years, Phaier had issued his version of nine books of Virgil's poem. In 1562 had appeared the famous rendering of the *Psalms* by Sternhold and Hopkins, with many others to assist them. In 1565, Arthur Golding had translated the first four books of the *Metamorphoses*. Next year Grant had published his adaptation of two books of Horace's *Odes*. Two volumes of *The Palace of Pleasure*, furnished by Paynter and others with Italian tales, chiefly from Boccaccio, were completed in 1566 and 1567. Numerous workmen, from such an one as Edmund Spenser down to the humblest wielder of the pen, were at this time busy in presenting the books of other lands to English readers. Even now, it may be, Sir John Harrington was busy with his version of the *Orlando Furioso;* while Carew, Sidney's old Oxford rival, was possibly beginning his *Godfrey of Boloigne*, adapted from Tasso.

It was in keeping with the tendency of the day, then,

that Sidney helped his sister to present the *Psalms* in better English verse than had yet been produced by the translators. We have no means of separating the brother's from the sister's work : but I imagine that Sidney did not do very much. Probably the idea and its application were both mainly due to the Countess of Pembroke, by whom were prepared translations of several other works. The version, made honestly and often with a fair measure of poetical skill, was in every way superior to that compiled by Sternhold and Hopkins. Of its merits a single quotation will afford sufficient evidence :—

"The Lord, the Lord my shepherd is,
And so can never I
Taste misery.
He rests me in green pastures His ;
By waters still and sweet
He guides my feet.

"He me revives, leads me the way
Which righteousness doth take
For His name's sake :
Yea, though I should through valleys stray
Of death's dark shade, I will
No whit fear ill.

"For Thou, dear Lord, Thou me besett'st,
Thy rod and Thy staff be
To comfort me :
Before me Thou a table sett'st,
E'en when foes' envious eye
Doth it espy.

"Thou oil'st my head, Thou fill'st my cup ;
Nay, more, Thou, endless good,
Shalt give me food.

To Thee, I pray, ascended up,
Where Thou, the Lord of all,
Dost hold Thy hall." *

In this holiday season at Wilton, Sidney commenced the writing of a much more important work, and one more thoroughly expressive of his own temper, while especially designed for his sister's amusement. This was *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, to be described hereafter. Here however must be cited the dedication of the book, as evidence of its origin and design. To his sister Philip wrote :—

"Here now have you, most dear, and most worthy to be most dear Lady, this idle work of mine; which, I fear, like the spider's web, will be thought fitter to be swept away, than worn to any other purpose. For my part, in very truth, as the cruel fathers among the Greeks were wont to do to the babes they would not foster, I could well find in my heart to cast out in some desert of forgetfulness this child which I am loth to father.† But you desired me to do it, and your desire to my heart is an absolute commandment. Now, it is done only for you, only to you. If you keep it to yourself, or to such friends who will weigh error in the balance of good-will, I hope for the father's sake it will be pardoned, perchance made much of, though in itself it have deformities. For, indeed, for severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled. Your dear self

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* *The Psalmes of David, translated into Divers and Sundry Kindes of Verse, more Rare and Excellent, for the Method and Variety, than ever yet hath been done in English.*—Ps. xxiii.

† It was in no affectation that Sidney spoke thus disparagingly of his work. A few hours before his death, he gave directions that the *Arcadia* should be given to the flames. Hence John Owen's epigram:

"Ipse tuam moriens (vel conjuge teste) jubebas
Arcadiam sævis ignibus esse cibum.
Si meruit mortem, quia flammam accendit amoris,
Mergi, non uri, debuit iste liber.
In librum quæcunque cadat sententia nullâ
Debuit ingenium morte perire tuum."

can best witness the manner, being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence, the rest by sheets sent unto you as fast as they were done. In sum, a young head not so well staid as I would it were, and shall be, when God will,—having many, many fancies begotten in it, if it had not been in some way delivered, would have grown a monster ; and more sorry might I be that they came in than that they got out. But his chief safety shall be the not walking abroad ; and his chief protection the bearing the livery of your name, which, if much good-will do not deceive me, is worthy to be a sanctuary for a greater offender. This say I, because I know the virtue so ; and this say I, because it may be ever so ; or, to say better, because it will be ever so. Read it then at your idle times, and the follies your good judgment will find in it, blame not, but laugh at ; and so—looking for no better stuff than as, in a haberdasher's shop, glasses or feathers—you will continue to love the writer who doth exceedingly love you, and most, most heartily prays you may long live to be a principal ornament to the family of the Sidneys.

"Your loving brother,

"Philip Sidney."

That dedication was not written till a year or two after the present period of Sidney's history, when he had written as much as he cared to write of the work commenced during his retirement at Wilton. Meanwhile other employments, not literary, helped to provide him occupation.

One business concerned his friend Spenser, who, since the publication of *The Shepheard's Calender*, had been rapidly rising in the world's esteem. In the early part of the year, he was busy about several works, among others a Latin poem, entitled *Stemmata Dudleiana*, not now extant. There were in it, he said in a letter to Gabriel Harvey, dated the 10th of April, "sundry apostrophes addressed you know to whom,—"*

* Todd, *Some Account of the Life of Spenser*, p. xx.

doubtless to Philip Sidney, in honour of whose kindred the whole work was composed. The poet was never ungrateful for his friends' kindnesses, and just now Sidney with his father's aid was doing his best to help him. At Philip's instigation, as we are to infer, Lord Grey of Wilton, a friend of the Sidneys, and Sir Henry's newly appointed successor as Lord Deputy of Ireland, was induced to take Spenser with him as his secretary.

In correspondence with his friends Sidney found partial occupation while at Wilton. To Languet, whom in the bustle of Court life he was prone to forget, he appears to have written often. From him, at any rate, he received many letters, which still live. The brave Huguenot, now growing old and feeble, lost nothing of his interest in the friend whom he most loved. In the early part of the year, we found him writing to urge Philip to seek safety on the continent. When in later months he saw that the danger was by no means so great as he had feared, he became anxious that Philip should return to his former place of influence at Court; nor was he alone in that wish. "All who are in these parts," he wrote from Antwerp, on the 24th of September, "wonder that you should delight in this long retirement of yours. They can readily understand how it is very pleasant for you to be in the company of those whom you especially love, but they think it undignified for you to remain so long concealed, and they fear, also, that seclusion will loosen the stern vigour with which you formerly worked so nobly, and that a listlessness, which at one time you despised, is gradually possessing your soul.

Languet knew Sidney too well to share those fears, yet he wished him to be working. Life, he urged, was not long enough for any part of it to be spent in idleness; least of all was the present a time for inactivity. Even if others might be pardoned for living uselessly, there could be no excuse for one so richly endowed with every grace and every talent as was Philip. Him, Languet said, he had always marked out for noble business. "When you were living with me, you used now and then to say that you hated the noise and glitter of Courts, and were resolved to live in honest ease and in the society of a few real friends; and, when I thought of your modesty, and of your freedom from ambition, I feared you were in earnest. But I judged that your thoughts would change as you grew older, and that your country would compel you to enrich it with the wealth of your virtue; and I seemed to judge rightly. No sooner had you returned to England than all men admired you, and every good man sought your friendship. Above all, your noble Queen treated you with marked good-will. As a token of her esteem and as an encouragement to your further pursuit of excellence, she admitted you to great familiarity with herself, and honoured you with that famous embassage to the Emperor which, three years ago, you conducted so creditably. How much she made of you is shown in the notable eulogy which Prince Casimir heard her utter." At such rapid growth, not only in virtue, but also in public estimation, often not attained by virtue, every one was delighted. Languet said that one reason for his quitting Germany and residing in the Nether-

lands, was that he might better watch his friend's advancement. "But when I came hither I found a cloud thrown over your fortunes, which turned my pleasure into sorrow." Surely, this ought not to be. "Ask yourself, I do beseech you, how far it is honourable for you to lurk where you are, while your country is claiming help of all her sons. If the advice which you offered, thinking it to be helpful to the nation, was not taken as it deserved to be, you ought not on that account to be angry with your country; or to desist from seeking her safety. When Themistocles was proposing measures beneficial to the State, Eurybiades threatened to strike him unless he held his peace; to which he answered, 'Strike, but hear.' Imitate Themistocles."* At great length Languet then showed the especial need of brave and manly action at the present moment. Europe was in a deplorable condition. The Spaniards, by their recent victories in Portugal, were showing, more plainly than ever, both their power and the bad use to which they were resolved to put it. In the Low Countries misfortunes were thickening, and, without foreign help, the Protestant cause could not much longer be maintained. It was a gloomy picture at best, and Languet, full of genuine fears, painted it in the darkest colours.

Languet's arguments, supported by other reasons just now working upon Sidney's mind, were successful. His English friends were as anxious as those on the Continent for his return to Court. Queen Elizabeth,

* *Langueti Epistolæ*, pp. 277—279.

moreover, was now willing to make some concessions of pride, and therefore it became her subjects to be as conciliatory. In August, or earlier, the Earl of Leicester had been recalled from his seclusion. It was through his influence probably that the disagreement between his nephew and the Queen was removed, Her Majesty offering forgiveness for the blunt, bold language which had offended her, and Sidney consenting to make no further objections to the purposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou.

Sidney was in London again, and lodging for awhile at Leicester House, in October. On the 18th of that month he wrote another long and noble letter to his brother Robert, which, in the absence of any detailed knowledge of his occupation, must be read for illustration of the writer's mind.

Its beginning touches money matters. Robert was an extravagant lad, and on that account he was often in trouble with his father. "I find," wrote Sir Henry, on one occasion, "that all your money is gone; which, with some wonder, displeaseth me; and if you cannot frame your charges according to that proportion I have appointed you, I must and will send for you home. Assure yourself I shall not enlarge one groat."* Robert was therefore driven to seek help from Philip, and Philip helped him gladly. "For the money you have received," he said, "assure yourself—for it is true—there is nothing I spend so pleaseth me as that which is for you. If ever I have ability, you will find it;

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 246.

if not, yet shall not any brother living be better beloved than you of me."

Sidney then proceeded to give him brotherly advice on several matters. In the first place, "look to your diet, sweet Robin, and hold up your heart in courage and virtue: truly, great part of my comfort is in you." Further on Philip said much, and said it very well, about the writing of history, that apparently being Robert's favourite study.

"For the method of writing history, Boden hath written at large: you may read him, and gather out of many words some matter. This I think in haste; a story is either to be considered as a story, or as a treatise, which, besides that, addeth many things for profit and ornament. As a story, it is nothing but a narration of things done, with the beginnings, causes, and appendances thereof. . . . . In that kind you have principally to note the examples of virtue or vice, with their good or evil successes, the establishments or ruins of great estates, with the causes, the time, and circumstances of the laws then wrote of, the enterings and endings of wars, and therein the stratagems against the enemy, and the discipline upon the soldier, and thus much as a very historiographer. Besides this, the historian makes himself a discourser for profit, and an orator, yea, a poet sometimes, for ornament: an orator, in making excellent orations *e re natâ*, which are to be marked, but marked with the note of rhetorical remembrances; a poet, in painting forth the effects, the motions, the whisperings of the people, which though in disputation, one might say were true, yet who will mark them well shall find them taste of a poetical vein, and in that kind are gallantly to be marked; for though, perchance, they were not so, yet it is enough they might be so. The last point which tends to teach profit, is of a discourse, which name I give to whosoever speaks, *non simpliciter de facto sed de qualitatibus et circumstantiis facti* (and that is it which makes me and many others rather note much with our pen than with our mind, because we leave all these discourses to the confused trust of our memory, because they being not tied to the tenor of of a question, as philosophers use sometimes places); the divine, in telling his opinion and reasons in religion; sometimes the lawyer, in

showing the causes and benefits of laws; sometimes a natural philosopher, in setting down the causes of any strange thing, which the story binds him to speak of; but most commonly, a moral philosopher, either in the epic part when he sets forth virtues or vices, and the natures of passions, or in the politic, when he doth (as he often doth) meddle sententiously with matters of estate. Again, sometimes he gives precept of war, both offensive and defensive; and so, lastly, not professing any art, as his matter leads him, he deals with all arts, which because it carrieth the life of a lively example, it is wonderful what light it gives to the arts themselves, so as the great civilians help themselves with the discourses of the historians; so do soldiers, and even philosophers and astronomers. But that I wish herein is this, that when you read any such thing, you straight bring it to his head, not only of what art, but by your logical subdivisions, to the next member and parcel of the art. And so, as in a table, be it witty words, of which Tacitus is full, sentences of which Livy, or similitudes whereof Plutarch, straight to lay it up in the right place in his storehouse, as either military, or more specially defensive military, or more particularly defensive by fortification, and so lay it up: so, likewise, in politic matters; and such a little table you may easily make, wherewith I would have you ever join the historical part, which is only the example of some stratagem or good counsel, or such like. This write I to you in great haste, of method without method, but with more leisure and study (if I do not find some book that satisfies), I will venture to write more largely of it unto you."

Then Philip passed on to speak of other subjects worthy of study. "Now, dear brother, take delight likewise in the mathematicals. I think you understand the sphere: if you do, I care little for any more astronomy in you. Arithmetic and geometry I would wish you well seen in, so as, both in matter of number and measure, you might have a feeling and active judgment. I would you did bear the mechanical instruments wherein the Dutch excel." "So you can speak and write Latin, not barbarously, I never require

great study in Ciceronianism, the chief abuse of Oxford, *qui, dum verba sectantur, res ipsas negligunt.*"

Sidney, though he had just come back to the full enjoyment of Queen Elizabeth's favour, though he had everything which a mere courtier could have wished to have, was not thereby made happy. In one part of this letter, overflowing as it was with kindly interest in all the noblest cares of life, he spoke as if he were almost weary of life altogether. "I write this to you," he said, "as one that, for myself, have given over the delight in the world, but wish to you as much if not more than to myself." And in another place he says: "My eyes are almost closed up, overwatched with tedious business." He bade his brother give good heed to the learning of music: "you will not believe what a want I find of it in my melancholy times." In other parts of this letter there was show of a forced gaiety, quite as indicative of Sidney's true mind as these open avowals of distress. But, whether gay or sad, there seemed no end to the pleasant brotherly counsel which, in desultory way, he liked to give.

"At horsemanship, when you exercise it, read Crison Claudio, and a book that is called *La Gloria del' Cavallo* withal, that you may join the thorough contemplation of it with the exercise; and so shall you profit more in a month than others in a year, and mark the bitting, saddling, and curing of horses. I would, by the way, your worship would learn a better hand; you write worse than I, and I write evil enough. Once again, have a care of your diet, and consequently of your complexion; remember, *Gratior est veniens in pulchro corpore virtus.* . . . . . When you play at weapons, I would have you get thick caps and brasers, and play out your play lustily, for indeed tricks and dalliances are nothing in earnest, for the time of the one and the other greatly differs: and use as well the blows as the thrust;

it is good in itself, and besides exerciseth your breath and strength, and will make you a strong man at the tourney and barriers. First, in any case, practise the single sword, and then with the dagger; let no day pass without an hour or two such exercise; the rest study, or confer diligently, and so shall you come home to my comfort and credit. Lord! how I have babbled! Once again, farewell, dearest brother.

"Your most loving and careful brother,

"PHILIP SIDNEY."*

It is not strange that Sir Henry Sidney, after complaining to Robert of his faults, should have said, "*Perge, perge*, my Robin, in the filial fear of God, and in the meanest imagination of yourself, and to the loving direction of your most loving brother. Imitate his virtues, exercises, studies, and actions. He is a rare ornament of this age, the very formular that all well-disposed young gentlemen of our court do form all their manners and life by. In troth, I speak it without flattery of him or of myself, he hath the most rare virtues that ever I found in any man."†

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. pp. 283—285.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 246.

CHAPTER X.

COURTLY BONDAGE.

1580—1582.

HUBERT LANGUET'S last letter to Sidney was dated from Antwerp, on the 28th of October, 1580. "I am glad," he said, "as I have already written, that you have abandoned your retirement and returned to the daylight of the Court; but I am afraid you will soon get weary of it. I see that its honours and dignities are given to age and wealth rather than to virtue and prudence, so that you, who are yet young and without property of your own, will not easily reap any advantage. It will be dreary work for you, wasting the spring-time of your life amid the formalities and indolence of a Court; for the employments of courtiers do not often produce any public good, and very seldom relate to the better part of life. But I am sure you will not allow yourself to be deceived by any foolish hopes. I know that you and your estimable friend Mr. Dyer, of whose honesty and prudence you have had such abundant proof, will think seriously of the position of your affairs, and will settle how to occupy yourselves. To your noble father, and to all your other kin it will be a great

satisfaction to enjoy the rich and good fruit of your intellect, whatever it may be. To your father, indeed, you owe a large debt; but still more are you bound to your country, on whose behalf you must do all you can to avert the cruel tempests which threaten it. You see how much good has come to poor distracted Ireland from your labours. I think there are not many men among you who would prefer the welfare of the State to their own interests. I anticipate many troubles, a future when your noblemen will be separated into factions and at strife with one another, when the neighbouring nations will throw fuel upon the fire which is to be kindled among you. Believe me, there are storms brewing that are not to be dispelled by the fallacies which have well nigh driven all noble-mindedness and simplicity of thought out of the Christian world." *

Those earnest sentences must have stirred Sidney as he read them; and when the noble man, who had been his loving friend for more than eight years, had passed out of a world about which he had grown almost hopeless, he must often have been reminded of their truth. Perhaps they fairly express the conclusion at which he had himself arrived respecting both the state of public affairs and the duties devolving upon him. But many difficulties were in the way. There arose numberless temptations of a kind most likely to prevail with a young, handsome, and talented man. These years, therefore, show us a prolonged struggle

* *Languети Epistolæ*, pp. 287, 288.

between the purest and wisest thoughts and aspirations which an earnest patriot could strive to embody in his life, and a whole army of hindrances, raised partly by his own weaker nature and maintained by the circumstances of his time and station.

He followed Languet's advice in taking counsel of Edward Dyer, although the communion appears to have been of much lighter character than the sturdy Huguenot had meant. Long before, these two and Fulke Greville had formed a sort of club for literary exercise, and in all courtly employments they were close associates through life. But Sidney's friends do not seem to have fallen into like disgrace to that which had caused him to retire from the court. He found them there on his return, and it is to this period that we may, without much question, refer a pleasant little pastoral, written "upon his meeting with his two friends and fellow-poets." Four out of ten verses are here :—

"Join, mates, in mirth to me,
Grant pleasure to our meeting ;
Let Pan, our good god, see,
How grateful is our greeting.
Join hearts and hands, so let it be ;
Make but one mind in bodies three.

"Ye hymns, and singing skill
Of god Apollo's giving,
Be pressed our reeds to fill
With sound of music living.
Join hearts and hands, so let it be ;
Make but one mind in bodies three.

* * * * *

"Welcome, my two, to me,
The number best beloved,
Within my heart you be
In friendship unremoved.
Join hearts and hands, so let it be;
Make but one mind in bodies three.
* * * * *

"Cause all the mirth you can,
Since I am now come hither,
Who never joy but when
I am with you together.
Join hearts and hands, so let it be,
Make but one mind in bodies three." *

But Sidney did not return to Court simply for the sake of meeting with these friends. He came to make peace with his Queen, to whom, on New Year's Day of 1581, he made three characteristic presents—a gold-handled whip, a golden chain, and a heart of gold, as though in token of his entire subservience to her Majesty, and his complete surrender of himself to the royal keeping. Yet he came also to pay homage to another sovereign, to Penelope Devereux, now Lady Rich, best known to all as Stella; and thereby to give some notable confirmation to Languet's estimate of the mischiefs and disasters incident to a courtier's life. To understand it, we must glance at some occurrences preceding his return to London in this autumn of 1580.

More than five years had passed since, in the summer of 1575, Philip first saw Penelope at Chartley.† During the ensuing winter he met her often at Durham

* Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody.*

† Nichols' *Progresses of Elizabeth*, vol. ii. p. 301.

House in the Strand, and when, in September of 1576, her father, the Earl of Essex, lay on his death-bed, almost his last prayer had been that Penelope kept from sharing in the common "frailness of women" and from "learning of the vile world," might be led to become the wife of "that good gentleman Mr. Philip Sidney." Two months later, Edward Waterhouse had written to say that all the best sort of the English lords looked for "the treaty between Mr. Philip and my Lady Penelope," and had given it as his own opinion that "the breaking off from their match would turn to more dishonour than could be repaired with any other marriage in England."

But at that time the young people were hardly old enough to be married. Penelope was in her fifteenth year and Philip was just two-and-twenty. Moreover, his affection, both then and for some time after, does not seem to have been very strong. He liked the society of the beautiful maiden. He paid her high and honest compliments. He did not object to being talked of as her worshipper. But that was all. His mind was too full of other matters for him to make true the rumours floating about Court, or even to give willing ear to Languet's constant advice that he should find a wife. His mission to Germany in 1577 added much to his interest in foreign politics,—an interest which grew mightily as he watched the affairs of the Continent becoming every day more perilous, and felt more and more anxious to join in the great struggle. Home politics, and social topics, and family business often engrossed his thought, either pleasantly or painfully.

His friendship with Spenser, new in 1579, created in his mind a whole world of literary projects and ambitions. What wonder is it that, amid all these concerns, he cared not to think seriously of the projected marriage, was content with maintaining that frolicsome sort of courtship for which he afterwards severely blamed himself?

"In truth, O Love, with what a boyish kind
Thou dost proceed in thy most serious ways,
That when the Heaven to thee his best displays,
Yet of that best thou leavest the best behind!
For, like a child, that some fair book doth find,
With gilded leaves or coloured vellum plays,
Or, at the most, on some fine picture stays,
But never heeds the fruit of writer's mind;
So, when thou saw'st, in Nature's cabinet,
Stella, thou straight look'dst babies in her eyes,
In her cheek's pit thou didst thy pitfold set,
And in her breast, bo-peep, or couching, lies,
Playing and shining in each outward part,
But, fool! seek'st not to get into her heart."*

Thus, as far as we are able to infer, stood matters between Philip and Penelope, when the Court became interested in the Duke of Anjou's fresh petition for Queen Elizabeth's hand. In the months during which Sidney was framing and uttering the bold arguments and earnest entreaties by which he sought to influence the sovereign of the land, he had no time to think much of the mistress of his own heart. And it is likely that, during the months of seclusion at Wilton, his dissatisfaction at courtly ways, his enjoyment of the

* *Astrophel and Stella*, Sonnet xi.

sisterly affection now notably manifested towards him, and his devotion to literary pursuits, all helped to divert his mind from thoughts of Stella. He did not know that the future, which for three or four years had been looked upon as certain, was now being made impossible.

Yet so it was. It appears that he whom all had till now courted, because the Queen smiled upon him, was thought poorly of by many, as soon as he was under the royal frown. Perhaps it was considered that her Majesty would not forgive him for the boldness he had shown: at any rate, he could no longer be trusted to make such sure and rapid progress to the highest honours in the State as had been lately expected. The beautiful Lady Penelope must not be married to so reckless a courtier. She deserved a husband able always to keep firm hold of the royal favour, one who would allow no private notions of right and duty to stand in the way of his personal advancement.

Such, at least, seems to have been the opinion of the Earl of Huntingdon, whose wife was Philip's aunt, and who acted as guardian to Penelope. Careful for his ward's interests, he determined to provide her with a proper husband; and, fortunately, one presented himself just now. The new suitor was Lord Robert Rich, inheritor of all the wealth and—said his contemporaries—of much of the vulgar and brutal disposition of his father Lord Chancellor Rich, lately deceased. Here was a husband worth having, "a proper gentleman," said the Earl of Huntingdon in a letter addressed on the 10th of March, 1580, to Lord Burghley, "and one

in years very fit for my Lady Penelope Devereux, if, with the favour and liking of her Majesty, the matter might be brought to pass." *

Apparently the matter was quite to the liking of her Majesty, as well as agreeable to all others concerned in it, save to Penelope herself, whose opinion was not taken, and to Philip who, seeking privacy down at Wilton, probably did not know what was being done in Lord Huntingdon's abode at Newcastle. When he did know, he expressed his thoughts in a sonnet more full of puns than of compliments.

"Rich fools there be, whose base and filthy heart
Lies hatching still the goods wherein they flow,
And, damning their own selves to Tantal's smart,
(Wealth breeding want), more blest, more wretched grow;
Yet to those fools Heaven doth such wit impart,
As what their hands do hold, their heads do know;
And knowing, love, and loving, lay apart
As sacred things, far from all danger's show.
But that Rich fool who, by blind Fortune's lot,
The richest gem of love and life enjoys,
And can with foul abuse such beauties blot;
Let him—deprived of sweet but unfelt joys,
Exiled for aye from those high treasures which
He knows not—grow in only folly Rich." *

The marriage was very soon completed, probably a month or two before Sidney returned to Court in October. Of Penelope's share in it and its future the Duke of Devonshire, writing twenty-five years later to

* British Museum, *Lansdowne MSS.*, vol. xxxi. No. 40.

† *Astrophel and Stella*, Sonnet xxv.

King James the First, averred that she, "being in the power of her friends, was married, against her will, unto one against whom she did protest at the very solemnity and ever after; between whom, from the first day, there ensued continual discord, although the same fears that forced her to marry constrained her to live with him."* Out of such an union who can wonder that adultery proceeded? and who, of all in Queen Elizabeth's Court, could have cast the first stone?

To Sidney the news of the marriage was terrible. There may be partial reflection of his thoughts in a *Dirge* which was probably written at about this time, and when, not knowing as much as he knew afterwards of Penelope's mind respecting it, he hurled part of his mockery at her.

"Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread,
For Love is dead!
All Love is dead, infected
With plague of deep disdain;
Worth, as nought worth, rejected;
And faith fair scorn doth gain.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female frenzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

"Weep, neighbours, weep! do you not hear it said
That Love is dead?
His death-bed peacock's folly,
His winding-sheet is shame,
His will false-seeming holy,
His sole executor blame.

* Devereux, *Lives of the Earls of Essex*, vol. i. p. 155.

From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female frenzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

"Let dirge be sung, and trentals rightly said,
For Love is dead!
Sir Wrong his tomb ordaineth
My mistress' marble heart,
Which epitaph containeth,
'Her eyes were once his dart.'
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female frenzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!"

Was it on finding that Penelope merited no blame for the marriage into which she had been forced that Sidney added this other verse?

"Alas! I lie; rage hath this error bred!
Love is not dead!
Love is not dead, but sleepeth
In her unmatchèd mind,
Where she his counsel keepeth
Till due deserts she find.
Therefore, from so vile fancy
To call such wit a phrenzy,
Who love can temper thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!"*

Let another little poem, *The Smokes of Melancholy*, be here quoted, as possibly giving evidence of Sidney's temper, somewhat later, when he had become familiar with his trouble:—

* *Miscellaneous Works*, pp. 248, 249.

"Who hath e'er felt the change of love,
And known those pangs that lovers prove,
May paint my face without seeing me
And write the state how my fancies be,
The loathsome buds grown on Sorrow's tree.
But who by hearsay speaks, and hath not partly felt
What kind of fires they be in which those spirits melt,
Shall guess—and fail—what doth displease;
Feeling my pulse, miss my disease.

"O no! O no! trial only shows
The bitter juice of forsaken woes,
Where former bliss present evils do slain;
Nay, former bliss adds to present pain,
While remembrance doth both states contain!
Come learners then to me, the model of mishap,
Ingulphed in despair, slid down from Fortune's lap;
And, as you like my double lot,
Tread in my steps, or follow not.

"For me, alas! I am full resolved
Those bands, alas! shall not be dissolved,
Nor break my word, though reward come late,
Nor fail my faith in my failing fate,
Nor change in change, though change change my state;
But always own myself, with eagle-eyed truth, to fly
Up to the sun, although the sun my wings do fry:
For if those flames burn my desire,
Yet shall I die in Phœnix' fire." *

In plain prose, Sidney, finding that his mistress had been cruelly and unwillingly stolen from him, resolved to go on courting her, and to court her more zealously than ever, now that she was another man's wife. It is easy to understand how the very loss which he had sustained roused all the latent love that was in him for Penelope. Hitherto his wooing had been of

* *Miscellaneous Works*, pp. 239, 240.

"boyish kind;" he had been talking prettily and gaily, as he might well do, to a girl in her teens, and hardly sought at all "to get into her heart." But now a rival, and such a rival! had suddenly snatched her from him. Every law of love, he doubtless thought, and every principle of honour, forbade his yielding tamely to the theft, constrained him to make fierce pursuit, and, at any peril, to win back his mistress's love.

For this crime Sidney is, of course, to be condemned. He himself soon learnt to condemn it in some of the finest poetry that ever found utterance through his pen. At first holding sentiments sanctioned alike by the example of the present and by the tradition of the past, his manly spirit quickly rejected them, and, after much brave battling with himself, he rose to a level of moral rectitude which none but the noblest minds of his own age could reach.

While the passion lasted, however, it shed only a baneful influence upon his life. If it stirred him to excellence in all the courtly graces for which he is famous, it withheld him from the full exercise of those virtues which are the true marks of his nobility. For two years we find him living a comparatively idle life, a life in which, though there was little to be really condemned, there was much less evidence of manly work than might have been expected from him.

About one sort of work that he did there is far too little information. We know that, in the early part of the year 1581, he served his Queen as member of her fourth Parliament in its third session, but of his share in the proceedings there is very scanty record. The

former sessions having been held in 1572 and 1576, he could not have been present in either instance, and he must therefore have been now elected for the first time.

The House was opened on the 16th of January. On the 27th was brought forward the most important business of the session. Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer, rose, and, in a powerful speech, pointed out the state of foreign affairs as they affected his country. England, he showed, was hated by all the great nations, because she alone was bold and persevering in the public maintenance of the Reformed Faith, and the noble Queen now upon the throne was especially detested because of her unparalleled zeal and uprightness. He enlarged upon the malicious conduct of Rome, working through the Continental powers; upon the perils arising out of the rebellious dealing in the north; and upon the dangers resulting from the secret and mischievous labours of evil-disposed persons in the kingdom, now seeking with unwonted eagerness to ruin the welfare of the nation.* At his request, therefore, a committee was appointed to consider the perils arising to the State from the evil practices of the Papists, to suggest sharper laws for restraining and bridling the obstinacy of the same, and to decide the amount of subsidy needed for preparing a force sufficient to defend the country both by land and by sea. In this committee Mr. Philip Sidney was elected to sit, his companions being Mr. Peter Wentworth and many other notable

* D'Ewes, pp. 285—289.

men.* On a later day, upon its recommendation, the House granted to her Majesty a supply of one subsidy and two-fifteenths. Various provisions were made for strengthening the hands of the government against dangerous subjects. Any one who apostatized to the Church of Rome or in any way aided others to apostatize, it was declared, should be held guilty of treason; any one who said mass was to be subjected to a year's imprisonment and a fine of two hundred marks; and any one present at such a service was liable to a year's imprisonment and a fine of a hundred marks. Twenty pounds a month constituted the penalty imposed on every one who absented himself from church.*

Equally fierce legislation was resolved upon in consequence of another committee, of which I find that Mr. Philip Sidney was appointed a member on the 1st of February.† Its business was the planning of a bill against slanderous words, rumours, and other seditious practices opposed to the Queen's majesty. For a first offence of this nature the convicted miscreant was to be sent to the pillory and to lose his ears, and a second was made punishable as felony.

On the 14th of February and many subsequent days Sidney shared in the handling of a remarkable case of privilege. One Arthur Hall, a burgess for Grantham, angry at some proceedings of the previous session, had published a book abusing the Commons as a drunken

* D'Ewes, p. 289; *Journals of the House of Commons*, vol. i. pp. 119, 120.

† *Journals*, p. 121.

body, given up to works of darkness. Thereat the House was reasonably incensed. Refusing to accept his submission, it expelled the unworthy member, imposed upon him a fine of five hundred marks, and committed him for six months to the Tower.*

The rough, earnest temper shown by this Elizabethan Parliament, in common with those which preceded and those which followed it, is curious, but its present meeting was short. On the 18th of March the House was adjourned preparatory to a dissolution. Sidney's first trial of Parliamentary life—novel and instructive, and doubtless very entertaining to him—was of hardly two months' duration.

Other matters however occurred to interest him. On the 16th of April there arrived at Dover a splendid embassage, headed by Francis of Bourbon, sent over to make arrangements respecting the Duke of Anjou's marriage with the Queen.

The aspect of affairs was much altered since the time, more than a year ago, when Sidney had written his letter about this marriage to Queen Elizabeth. The large party of which he had been so conspicuous a member, and on behalf of which he had done his utmost to prevent the match, had not altered its judgment; but it had ceased to publish the expression of disapproval. If Elizabeth was resolved upon the match, these men thought, no avowed opposition would be of any use; nay, their arguments, repeated too often, would only irritate her and perhaps drive her more certainly to the very issue

* D'Ewes, p. 291, &c.; *Journals*, p. 126, &c.

which they dreaded. The only chance of averting it was by prudently submitting to her whim and keeping a watchful eye upon the progress of events, so as to be ready to make the best of any opportunity that might arise for furthering their wishes. Moreover, when all was said, this was as much a personal as a public matter. However they might disapprove of the marriage and think it harmful to the nation, the responsibility must rest with the Queen, who certainly had a right to choose any husband she liked.

There was a measure of worldly wisdom in conclusions like these, with which a number of courtiers, Leicester being leader, persuaded themselves that it would be right to adopt a course whereby they would be re-instated in the royal favour; and Sidney cannot be altogether defended for agreeing with them. He had special excuse, however, for acting thus, in that Hubert Languet entreated him to it, while another and still more trustworthy friend, Prince William of Orange, even expressed approval of the marriage and had liking for Anjou.

In the spring of 1581, therefore, there was no such show of discontent as had marked the opening months of 1580. The French Ambassadors, proceeding to London by water, were very honourably received. Lord Burghley, the Earls of Sussex, Leicester, Bedford, and Lincoln, Sir Francis Walsingham, and Sir Christopher Hatton were appointed by her Majesty to confer with the Duke of Anjou's delegates respecting the terms of the intended marriage-contract.

Sidney took a courtier's share in this business. He

and three others, the Earl of Arundel, Lord Windsor, and Fulke Greville, planned for the entertainment of the visitors a splendid exhibition of English prowess and of their own wit and valour. At that end of the Tilt-yard in Whitehall which was nearest to the Queen's window was to be erected a Fortress of Perfect Beauty, the fancied abode of Elizabeth herself, and this fortress they, calling themselves the Four Foster Children of Desire, were to win by force of arms. The show was first announced on Sunday, the 16th of April, and her Majesty fixed the 24th for its enactment. But the meeting, for some reason or other several times postponed, did not take place till Whit-Monday, the 15th of May.

On that day everything was ready. By help of wood and canvass and paint, a veritable Fortress of Beauty was erected, with an artificial mound, suitable for warlike exercise, adjoining it. Presently the Four approached. First came the Earl of Arundel, and he was followed by Lord Windsor, each of them gorgeously clad and largely attended. Next arrived Mr. Philip Sidney, not with so much magnificence as the other two, but certainly with splendour enough. Of his armour part was blue and the rest gilt. Besides the charger on which he sat, four spare horses richly caparisoned were led by as many pages. In his train there were also thirty gentlemen and yeomen, with four trumpeters, all dressed in cassock coats, caps, Venetian hose of yellow velvet, adorned with silver lace, and white buskins. On the coat of each one of these attendants was a silver band, passing like a scarf over the shoulder and under

the arm, and showing, in both front and rear, the motto, *Sic nos non nobis.* Last rode Mr. Fulke Greville, wearing gilt armour, and with followers decked in tawny taffeta, which was lined with yellow sarcenet and adorned with gold loops and buttons, in tawny taffeta hats, and in yellow worsted stockings. The Four were thus accompanied by a little army, amounting in all to more than two hundred men.

Speeches were made and songs were sung by way of preface ; and of them we have fuller account than of the actual tournament. The challengers marched up and down the yard, and at length proceeded to run tilt, each one in his turn and each running six courses, against any who came to oppose them. Of opponents there were several. Mr. Henry Grey, Sir Thomas Perrot, Mr. Anthony Cooke, Mr. Thomas Ratcliffe, the four sons of Sir Francis Knollys, Mr. Ralph Bowes, and a dozen others presented themselves. It was an idle vanity on the part of the Four to propose resistance to so many, and as might have been foretold, before nightfall they were seriously discomfited.

Next day, being Whit-Tuesday, they entered the yard in a chariot, looking very wearied and already half-overcome. More speeches were delivered, but now in a different tone, "No confidence in themselves," it was said, "O most unmatched Princess, before whom envy dieth, wanting all nearness of comparison to entertain it, and admiration is expressed, finding the scope of it void of conceivable limits,—no confidence in themselves, nor any slight regarding of the force of your valiant knights, hath encouraged the Foster Children

of Desire to make this day an inheritor of yesterday's action. They are violently borne whither Desire draweth, although they must confess (alas! that yesterday's brave onset should come to such a confession!) that they are not greatly companied with Hope, the common supplier of Desire's army; so as now, from summoning this castle to yield, they are fallen lowly to beseech you to vouchsafe your eyes out of that impregnable fortress to behold what will fall out between them and your famous knights. Whence, though they be so overpassed with others' valour that already they could scarcely have been able to come hither if the chariot of Desire had not carried them, yet will they make this whole assembly witness so far their will, that sooner their souls shall leave their bodies than Desire shall leave their souls."

Then they went to the tourney, shivering so many swords, and dealing so many lusty blows, that it seemed, says one who stood by, as if the Greeks were alive again and the Trojan war renewed. No party was spared, he adds, no estate excepted, but each knight strove to be the victor, at any rate in the favouring eyes of his mistress.

Towards evening the sport ended. A boy wearing ash-coloured garments in token of submission, and with an olive-branch in his hand, approached the Queen, and humbly tendered an avowal that the Four Foster Children of Desire were utterly defeated in their essay against the Fortress of Perfect Beauty. The Queen gave praise and thanks to all, however—to the vanquished as well as to the victors—for the pleasant sport which

they had caused, and for the great skill they had shown, and the whole company dispersed in very joyful state.*

Defeat in such an unequal contest was no discredit to Sidney. Similar exercises of arms, though not gorgeous enough to be specially recorded, were often performed on Sundays after church-time; and in these he was frequently successful. Of one such victory he has given the history in verse.

"Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance,
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy France,
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
Townfolks my strength; a dantier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shoot awry! The true cause is,
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race." †

Sidney was thus zealously playing at war, when he received an invitation to take part in the real business of fighting. It came from Don Antonio, Prior of Crato, the natural son of a brother of King Henry the Fifth of Portugal. Henry had died without issue in 1579, and

* The affair is fully described by Henry Goldwell, in a tract which has been reprinted by Nichols, *Royal Progresses*, vol. ii. pp. 312—329.

† *Astrophel and Stella*, sonnet xli.

there were seven competitors for the crown. Philip the Second of Spain, with no claim save his might, proved the successful one, his most formidable rival, however, being Don Antonio. Mobs shouted in Antonio's favour, and many foreigners were disposed to help him. At some previous time he had made the acquaintance of Sidney; and to him he now wrote from Tunis, on the 3rd of May, begging him to maintain the correspondence between them and to write often. He told him of the hopefulness of his cause and of the aid promised him by several gentlemen; but, he added, "though many more should go, if I do not see you in the company, I shall say *numerum non habet illa suum.*"* Of course Sidney did not accept the offer. Had the call been better worth attending to, he would hardly have chosen to quit England just now. But in this case there was nothing to tempt him. Don Antonio was a worthless fellow, and every candid man must have seen that he could not hope for any lasting success in a struggle with the King of Spain. He spent fifteen years in the vain hope of obtaining adequate help, in the end dying wretchedly at Paris, in 1595.

Sidney remained in England. Generally he was at Court, though often family or friendly business took him out of town. In the course of the summer he appears, together with his uncle and his brother-in-law, the Earls of Leicester and Pembroke, to have spent a few days at Oxford, witnessing the public exercises with which, in those days, the scholars always enter-

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 294.

tained distinguished visitors. Among other amusements, he saw the performance, by the fellows of his old college, Christ Church, of a Latin play written by William Gage, and entitled *Meleager*.*

He was in London and with the Court for some time previous to the 10th of October. On that day he wrote a very curious letter to Lord Burghley.

"Right Honourable and very singular good Lord,

"I was to have waited on your Lordship at Cecil House, but there, understanding that your Lordship was gone to Theobald's, I thought it no reason to trouble your Lordship there, but am bold only with these few lines to remember me to your Lordship's goodness. Yesterday her Majesty, at my taking my leave, said, against that I came up again, she would take some order for care of me therein. Her Majesty seemed then to like better of some present manner of relief than the expecting the office. Truly, Sir, so do I, too. But, being wholly out of comfort, I rather chose to have some token, that my friends might see I had not utterly lost my time: so, these do I leave it to your Lordship's good favour towards me. My suit is for 100*l.* a year in impropriations; if not the one, then the other; if neither, yet her Majesty's speedy answer will, both in respect of usury and other cumbers, be much better to me than delay; which I am no bolder to desire of your Lordship than I will be ready to deserve it with my uttermost power, when so mean a matter may be commanded by you. And so, praying for your long and healthful life, I humbly take my leave.

"Your Lordship's humbly at commandment,

"Philip Sidney." †

It seems, then, that Sidney—finding the gaieties of Court life too expensive to be easily met by the slender

* Zouch, p. 186. This play of *Meleager* is chiefly memorable from the circumstance that Jeremy Collier, reading it and a prefatory letter of its author's to Doctor John Raynolds, was induced thereby to write his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of Stage Plays*.

† Murdin, *Burghley Papers*, p. 364.

allowance which his father, never very rich and now especially poor, could afford him—was making earnest suit for some means of getting rid of the usury and other encumbrances to which he had been forced to have resort. He was probably successful; for we know that, some time before his death, the Queen granted him a sinecure, worth a hundred and twenty pounds a-year, which, forty years afterwards, was conferred on George Herbert the poet.* At any rate, he appears just now to have been on very good terms with her Majesty. There is a brief letter, dated at Gravesend on the 10th of November, which shows not only that he was in the mood for paying her some graceful compliments, but also that he was serving her by the exercise of his ingenuity in the preparation of some scheme for secret writing.

"MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

"This rude piece of paper shall presume, because of your Majesty's commandment, most humbly to present such a cypher as a little leisure could afford me. If there come any matter to my knowledge, the importance whereof shall deserve to be so masked, I will not fail, since your pleasure is my only boldness, to your own hands to recommend it. In the meantime, I beseach your Majesty will vouchsafe to read my heart in the course of my life; and, though itself be but of a mean worth, yet to esteem it like a poor house well set. I most lowly kiss your hands, and pray to God your enemies may then only have peace when they are weary of knowing your force.

"Your Majesty's most humble servant,

"PHILIP SIDNEY."†

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* Izaac Walton, *Life of Mr. George Herbert* (ed. 1827), p. 265.

† Murdin, *Burghley Papers*, pp. 364, 365.

In that letter there is graceful thought pleasantly worded. But I imagine Sidney's mood at this time, and through some months previously, was not altogether commendable. He was too often tempted to forget the stern calls of duty in that "false, fine, courtly pleasure" which he deprecated in his better moments. It was not enough that, among courtiers, he was better than most—there was a spirit in him which required that he should live a life and pursue an end which could not be possible within the narrow limits of an idle, pleasure-loving Court. There was something like a fulfilment of Languet's gloomy forebodings, —"wasting the springtime of life amid the formalities and indolence of a Court." Had his honest friend been able to watch him now, he would surely have offered some plainspoken, warning advice.

But Languet was dead. He had lived his three-and-sixty years, full, to him at any rate, of numberless sorrows, interspersed with but very few joys. In his last hours, as he lay at Antwerp, he was tenderly nursed by the wife of Philip Du Plessis Mornay, a woman concerning whom nothing but sweet, rich praise is recorded. To her he said—what in less solemn tones he had often said before—that he had thus far struggled on through life in the hope of seeing, and even helping on, a reformation of which the world had grievous need; but now that he saw how nations were steadily growing worse, he was only glad to leave it. He sent messages to his friends, especially to Du Plessis, who, he thankfully acknowledged, had sheltered him from destruction during the Saint Bar-

tholomew Massacre at Paris, where they both were at the time, and who had ever since been one of his truest and wisest associates. Soon after that, on the 30th of September, he died. William, Prince of Orange, headed the long troop of friends who followed him to the grave.

To Sidney the loss was a very great one. During more than eight years, some of them years of perilous transition from youth to manhood, Languet had watched him with loving and anxious eyes. In every trouble and difficulty Languet had been to him a very kind adviser and a very willing helper. Indeed, he was almost too zealous in his protection. Timid for his young friend where he would himself have walked boldly, he sometimes hindered him from what it might have been right to do, and coaxed him into conduct which was safe rather than manly. But the faults of Languet's tenderness may well be forgotten in consideration of the good derived by Sidney from his friendship. Philip never spoke otherwise than in loving acknowledgment of his debt. And now especially, when death had withdrawn their intercourse into the past, he felt how much he owed to Languet. He was at this time writing the *Arcadia*, a work not altogether in sympathy with Languet's strong Huguenot character; but in it he took occasion to pause and offer just and graceful homage to his memory,

> "For clerkly reed, and hating what is naught,
> For faithful heart, clean hands, and mouth as true.
> With his sweet skill, my skilless youth he drew,
> To have a feeling taste of Him that sits
> Beyond the heavens, far more beyond our wits."

But in the busy world there was much to divert Sidney from his private grief. Now, more than ever, the talk of Court and people was about the Duke of Anjou. By the commissioners appointed in the spring to confer with the French ambassadors, terms of marriage had been prepared. These were not insignificant, providing as they did, among other things, for the contingency of England being made subject to a king of France. Elizabeth herself seems to have been startled by them. In order to feel her way more surely, she had, in July, sent Sir Francis Walsingham across the Channel, to treat with King Henry of France respecting a league against Spain. Henry was willing to form a league, but much more anxious to get rid of his troublesome brother, and see him quietly lodged by the crown of England. Elizabeth knew not what she wanted. Walsingham received from her all sorts of despatches, each one contradicting its predecessor, and after three or four months' absence, he returned to London with nothing done. "When Her Majesty," he said, in a letter to Burghley, "is pressed to the marriage, then she seemeth to affect a league; and when the league is yielded to, then she liketh better a marriage; and when thereupon she is moved to assent to marriage, then she hath recourse to the league; and when the motion for the league, or any request is made for money, then Her Majesty returneth to the marriage." *

Affairs being in this fluctuating state, the Duke

* Digges, *Complete Ambassador*, p. 408.

thought it best to come and plead his own cause. Arriving on the 1st of November, he was gaily entertained for at least three months. In the entertainments, however, Sidney appears not to have taken much part. I infer that just now he avoided the Court as much as was possible. He was at Wilton on the 17th of December, and on that day he sent a friendly letter to Sir Francis Walsingham :—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR,

"The country affords no other stuff for letters but humble salutations, which humbly and heartily I send to yourself, my good lady, and my exceeding like to be good friend. I will be bold to add the beseeching you to favour this bearer, that he may have some consideration for the packet he brought, because belonging to my brother Robert, a younger brother of so youngly a fortunate family as the Sidneys, I am sure, at the least have very vehement evidences, that he is more stored with discourses than with money, and I will no further trouble your Honour but take my leave and pray for you.

"Your Honour's humble at commandment,

"PHILIP SIDNEY."*

Robert, aged about nineteen, had at this time nearly completed the three years' stay upon the Continent, which he had commenced under the care of Hubert Languet. Languet's later letters to Philip are full of alternate praises and complaints concerning the high-spirited lad, now evincing the strange character which, without much repetition of his brother's noble nature, was to help him to wealth and fame as the second Earl of Leicester. The purport of the communication from him of which Philip here spoke is not recorded.

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. cl. No. 85.

But to us the letter is chiefly noticeable as an indication of the solid friendship maintained between Sidney and Walsingham. Begun more than nine years ago, at the time of the Saint Bartholomew massacre, it had steadily continued and increased. Between them there was eighteen years' difference in age, but in all else there was substantial sympathy. Both men nobly strove to live honestly in the midst of courtly hollowness. Both watched with intense interest, and did all they possibly could to aid, the battle of freedom, now being waged in the Low Countries, against Spanish and Romish thraldom. Both were famous for their generous patronage of literature and learning. We shall presently see their friendship issuing in one very important event. Perhaps, indeed, the event is foreshadowed in this letter. It is not over fanciful to identify the lady here alluded to, as "my exceeding like to be good friend," with Fanny Walsingham, presently to become not only friend but wife to Sir Philip Sidney. But this was not yet. Fanny was now hardly more than thirteen years old, and Stella was not so soon forgotten.

Philip, moreover, had much else to think about when he returned to share the gaieties of the Court, now doubly gay because the Queen's French suitor was in attendance.

If Sidney was with the Queen at Christmas, he probably did not greatly enjoy her festivities. Perhaps there is some sign of his dissatisfaction in the circumstance, that on the ensuing New Year's day he made no present to the Queen. Of course several gifts were tendered by Anjou ; one of them was a shekel of gold,

with the motto *Serviet eternum dulcis quem torquet Eliza;* another was a gold padlock hanging to a gold chain; a third consisted of a bunch of gold flowers with gems for petals.*

There can be no doubt that the Duke, ugly in body, but far uglier in mind and heart—a man of whom his sister, Queen Margaret of Navarre, had not too harshly said, that, "if fraud and cruelty were to be banished from the earth, there was in him a sufficient stock from which it could be replenished"—was, after her fashion, really loved by Queen Elizabeth. When he departed from her, she thus expressed her trouble :—

"I grieve, and dare not show my discontent;
I love, and yet am forced to seem to hate;
I do, yet dare not seem I ever meant;
I seem stark mute, yet inwardly do prate;
I am, and not; I freeze, and yet am burned;
Since from myself my other self I turned.

"My care is like my shadow in the sun;
Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it,
Stands and lies by me, doth what I have done;
His too familiar care doth make me rue it:
No means I find to rid him from my breast,
Till by the end of things it be suppressed.

"Some gentler passions slide into my mind,
For I am soft and made of melting snow;
Or be more cruel, Love, and so be kind,
Let me or float or sink, be high or low;
Or let me live with some more sweet content,
Or die, and so forget what love e'er meant."†

The tearful parting occurred in February, 1582. As

* Nichols, *Royal Progresses*, vol. ii. p. 387.

† Ibid., p. 346. From a MS. in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

a mark of respect for the Duke, Elizabeth appointed several of her chief courtiers to accompany him to the Low Countries. The Earl of Leicester, Lord Hunsden, and Lord Howard took the lead, and with them were Mr. Philip Sidney, Mr. Walter Raleigh, Mr. Fulke Greville, Mr. Edward Dyer, and a host of others. This was Sidney's third journey to the Continent, but he had never yet made much stay in the Netherlands.

The Duke left London on the first of the month, the Queen herself going with him as far as Canterbury. He then proceeded to Flushing, where he was welcomed by Prince William of Orange, who professed great delight at his arrival. Deputies from all the neighbouring states and cities met and honoured him as the bridegroom elect of the Queen of England. Everywhere there was great festivity.

Reaching Antwerp on the 19th of February, the son of Catherine de' Medici became the hero in shows of unexampled splendour. Being led to a spacious theatre, and there elected Duke of Brabant, he pledged himself to deliver the States from the oppression and tyranny of the Spaniards; to rule them according to their customary laws and privileges; yea, even to the shedding of his own blood or the giving up of his own life. He then took the prescribed oaths, the Prince of Orange putting on him the crimson mantle and crimson bonnet, venerable tokens of the sacredness of his office; and after that other titles and honours were conferred. These things done, the company passed from the theatre into the open street. There they met a damsel personating the Maid of Antwerp, who came in a Chariot

of Alliance and brought the keys of the town to place at his feet. On her right side was Religion, dressed like a sibyl, and holding in one hand an open book, entitled *The Law and the Gospel*, in the other one marked *God's Word*. On the maiden's left was Justice, carrying a balance labelled *Yea and Nay*. Before her was Concord, whose target displayed a crowned sceptre with two little snakes and two tender doves enclosed in a garland of olive. On one side of Concord walked Wisdom, on the other Force. Then there were some scriptural shows. Samuel taking the kingdom from Saul and giving it to David typified the transference of the States from the wicked rule of Spain to the wise, strong government of the Duke of Anjou and Brabant. In the intimacy of David and Jonathan was found illustration of the new alliance between the Duke and Queen Elizabeth. These having been seen, there were numberless other spectacles, exhibiting all sorts of nymphs and virtues, and in which naked men and gorgeously apparelled dames took part.*

But it all came to an end. The thunder of applause died out, the glitter of compliment faded away; and presently the Duke of Anjou gave to all the world, even to Queen Elizabeth, undeniable proof that, if he had more folly than comported with the mock dignity of a proper knave, he was far too knavish to pass for a mere fool.

This happened in Sidney's lifetime, and therefore

* The whole is detailed in a tract which Nichols, that prince of spectacle-loving antiquarians, has reprinted in his *Royal Progresses*, vol. ii.

soon enough for him to hear every one acknowledge the wisdom of his former strictures upon Anjou. But, perhaps, even now, in the midst of these very splendours that he was witnessing, he saw abundant confirmation of all he had said. I imagine that, fond as he was of the spectacles which sorted well with the temper of the age, he was not altogether happy now. From first to last he had heartily disapproved of the Duke's schemes, and he would rather have welcomed his disgrace than all this show of what seemed promise of success. Sometimes, even in this giddy Antwerp, he must have turned aside from the gaiety and have walked sadly by the grave of Hubert Languet, not yet five months dead. What substance would he have seen under these shows!

But Sidney was not long in the Netherlands. The Antwerp shows being over, he at once returned with the rest, and by the 28th of March he was again at Court. On that day he wrote a letter to Lady Kitson, whose husband, Sir Thomas, had fallen into great disgrace on account of his Catholic creed and of his friendship with the suspected Duke of Norfolk. Sidney said that he could procure no satisfactory promise of pardon, but, he added, "I assure you, Madam, upon my faith, I dealt carefully and earnestly, owing to a particular duty, unto Sir Thomas, which I will never fail to show to my uttermost; and if otherwise have been thought, I have been mistaken; and if said, the more wronged." He hoped, however, that his efforts would soon lead to the easing of her great trouble.*

* Gage, *History and Antiquities of Hengrave in Suffolk* (1822), pp. 182, 183.

Of the beginning and end of that friendly act of Sidney's we are ignorant. But it helps us to understand his temper at this time. He used his position near the Queen for doing as much good as he was able, both to individuals and to the State. Now, much more than in the previous summer, he was trying to act up to Languet's notion of the duties that devolved upon him. Many things conspired to bring about this change, although its full issue was as yet by no means apparent.

He was still a courtier. Very often in attendance on the Queen, at Windsor, or Hampton Court, or Richmond, or Oatlands, or Nonsuch, or Greenwich, or some other of the royal abodes, he now stood high in the favour of her Majesty. Unable to discern the noblest parts of his nature, she liked him for his witty, sensible, and learned talk; and yet more, perhaps, for his good looks and graceful bearing. Sidney was a handsome man. "He was not only an excellent wit," writes that pleasant gossip, John Aubrey, "but extremely beautiful. He much resembled his sister; but his hair was not red"—whence we are to infer that the Countess of Pembroke's hair was red—"but a little inclining, namely, a dark amber colour. If I were to find a fault in it, methinks 'tis not masculine enough; yet he was a person of great courage."

A person of great courage assuredly was Philip Sidney, albeit his valour was at this time too much shown in the breaking of lances at the tournament, and in the winning of smiles at Court. If we are to credit the report of his contemporaries, every gallant gentle-

man vied with him in all the courtly exercises of the day, and every noble lady strove to earn his compliments. "For," says Spenser, in the exquisite pastoral which, notwithstanding its framework of fiction, may be taken as holding no more than a truthful picture of its hero,—

"For, from the time that first the nymph, his mother,
Him forth did bring and taught her lambs to feed,
A slender swain, excelling far each other
In comely shape, like her that did him breed,
He grew up fast in goodness and in grace,
And doubly fair wax'd both in mind and face.

"Which daily more and more he did augment
With gentle usage and demeanour mild,
That all men's hearts with secret ravishment
He stole away and willingly beguiled.
Nor spite itself, that all good things doth spill,
Found aught in him that she could say was ill.

"His sports were fair, his joyance innocent,
Sweet without sour and honey without gall:
And he himself seemed made for merriment,
Merrily masqueing both in bower and hall.
There was no pleasure not delightful play
When Astrophel so ever was away.

"For he could pipe, and dance, and carol sweet,
Amongst the shepherds in their shearing feast;
As summer's lark, that with her song doth greet
The dawning day, forth coming from the east.
And lays of love he also could compose:
Thrice happy she whom he to praise did choose.

"Full many maidens often did him woo
Them to vouchsafe amongst his rhymes to name,
Or make for them, as he was wont to do
For her that did his heart with love inflame:
For which they promised to dight for him
Gay chapelets of flowers and garlands trim.

"And many a nymph both of the wood and brook,
Soon as his oaten pipe began to thrill,
Both crystal wells and shady groves forsook
To hear the charms of his enchanting skill,
And brought him presents,—flowers if it were prime,
Or mellow fruit if it were harvest time.

"But he for none of them did care a whit,
Yet wood gods for them often sighèd sore,—
Nor for their gifts, unworthy of his wit,
Yet not unworthy of the country's store:
For one alone he cared, for one he sigh't
His life's desire and his dear love's delight." *

Sidney being such an one, it was natural that the royal smile should beam on him very brightly. Elizabeth was too old to coquet much with him, as she delighted to coquet with his uncle Leicester; but she liked to have him near her, and to use great freedom with him. He was her Philip, just as, long ago, the Lord Deputy, his father, had been her Harry.

Of the cares and sighs, the desire and delight which came to him in the course of his passion for Lady Rich, Sidney has told us much in his *Astrophel and Stella*:—

"Loving in truth, and fain my love to show,
That she, dear she! might take some pleasure of my pain,
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain;
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun-burnt brain.

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* *Astrophel*, lines 13—54.

But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, blest step-dame Study's blows,
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
'Fool!' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write!'"*

It is clear that Sidney did not always look simply into his heart before writing. In his *Astrophel and Stella* there is plenty of intellectual exercise, there are plenty of overstrained compliments and fantastical expressions, giving evidence that its author had often turned over the leaves which spoke of Petrarch's Laura or of Surrey's Geraldine. But in all the sonnets there is reflection of his varying temperament, and from many may be drawn intelligence as to the history of his thoughts. Thus vehemently he reproached himself for having, in former days, let slip the opportunity of chaste union with the lady of his love:—

"I might—unhappy word! O me! I might,
And then would not, or could not, see my bliss;
Till now, wrapped in a most infernal night,
I find how heavenly day—wretch!—I did miss.
Heart, rend thyself; thou dost thyself but right:
No lovely Paris made thy Helen his:
No force, no fraud, robbed thee of thy delight;
Nor fortune of thy fortune author is.
But to myself myself did give the blow,
While too much wit, forsooth, so troubled me,
That I respects for both our sakes must show,—
And yet could not, by rising morn, foresee
How fair a day was near. O punished eyes!
That I had been more foolish, or more wise!"†

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* *Astrophel and Stella*, sonnet i.

† Ibid., sonnet xxxiii.

Now he resolved he would not be backward in tendering his homage, but,—

"What may words say, or what may words not say,
Where truth itself must speak like flattery?
Within what bounds can one his liking stay,
Where nature doth with infinite agree?
What Nestor's counsel can my flames allay,
Since reason's self doth blow the coal on me?
And ah! what hope that hope should once see day,
Where Cupid is sworn page to chastity?
Honour is honoured, that thou dost possess
Him as thy slave; and now long needy fame
Doth even grow Rich, naming my Stella's name:
Wit learns in thee perfection to express:
Not thou by praise, but praise in thee is raised;
It is a praise to praise when thou art praised."*

Always abundant in compliment, the lover liked especially to make playful use of his lady's name. Here is an instance, not bespeaking so much wretchedness as we saw ere now :—

"My mouth doth water, and my breast doth swell,
My tongue doth itch, my thoughts in labour be;
Listen then, lordings, with good ear to me,
For of my life I must a riddle tell.
Towards Aurora's Court a nymph doth dwell,
Rich in all beauties which man's eye can see,
Beauties so far from reach of words, that we
Abuse her praise, saying she doth excel:
Rich in the treasure of deserved renown;
Rich in the riches of a royal heart;
Rich in those gifts which give the eternal crown;
Who, though most rich in these and every part
Which make the patents of sure worldly bliss,
Hath no misfortune but that Rich she is."†

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* *Astrophel and Stella*, sonnet xxxv.

† Ibid., sonnet xxxvii.

Without question Stella liked such praise. There was no prudery or delicacy fashionable at Court, by the rules of which it could be condemned. If Sidney and Spenser may be credited, the only fault found in him was that he paid his vows to one alone. We have read Spenser's statement. Thus the lover exclaims :—

"Because I breathe not love to every one,
Nor do not use set colours for to wear,
Nor nourish special locks of vowèd hair,
Nor give each speech a full point of a groan,
The courtly nymphs, acquainted with the moan
Of them, who, in their lips, Love's standard bear,
'What, he!' say they of me, 'now dare I swear,
He cannot love : no, no ; let him alone!'" *

Sidney would gladly have been left alone, he tells in other sonnets ; but there was no peace for him at Court : in no way could he be free from the persecution of fair ladies who would be spoken gaily to, and who, at the least, expected pleasant answers to their idle questions and all their foolish-wise "discourse of courtly tides." They misconstrued his silence and took umbrage at his disregard of them :—

"Because I oft, in dark abstracted guise,
Seem most alone in greatest company,
With dearth of words or answers quite awry
To them that would make speech of speech arise—
They deem, and of their doom the rumours flies
That poison foul of bubbling pride doth lie
So in my swelling breast, that only I
Fawn on myself and others do despise." †

* *Astrophel and Stella*, sonnet liv.
† Ibid., sonnet xxvii.

From all this playful banter a plain meaning is to be extracted. Sidney was moving about in these courtly circles, was charming all by his handsome figure and witty speech; the very frequency of his silence and his often haughty bearing only added to the interest with which he was regarded by Queen and courtier. But in this life he had little real satisfaction. Whether he fluttered about and dashed himself against the golden bars, or sang sweet notes which every one rejoiced to hear, he was as a caged bird still.

"The curious wits, seeing dull pensiveness
Bewray itself in my long-settled eyes,
Whence these same fumes of melancholy rise
With idle pains and missing aim do guess.
Some that know how my spring I did address,
Deem that my muse some fruit of knowledge plies;
Others, because the Prince my service tries,
Think that I think State errors to redress:
But harder judges judge ambition's rage,
Scourge of itself, still climbing slippery place,
Holds my young brain captive in golden cage.
O fools, or over-wise, alas! the race
Of all my thoughts hath neither stop nor start,
But only Stella's eyes and Stella's heart." *

Philip might well exclaim, "Alas!" He knew quite well that this career of gaiety, this surrendering of his manly eloquence to the gratification of a vain and praise-loving Queen, this devotion of himself to an unworthy love-passion, were not the work in life which he was appointed to fulfil. He ought to be doing just what the curious wits in sport accused him of contemplating.

* *Astrophel and Stella*, sonnet xxiii.

The seed which he himself had planted in his youth ought to be blossoming into wholesome fruit of knowledge, instead of this showy but poisonous nightshade of mere courtly pleasure. There were State errors in abundance to be redressed, and he had peculiar fitness for redressing them. Why was he not at his work? No wonder he was pensive and melancholy, often bitterly chagrined.

"With what sharp checks I in myself am spent,
When into reason's audit I do go;
And by just 'compts myself a bankrupt know
Of all those goods which Heaven to me hath lent;
Unable quite to pay even Nature's rent
Which unto it by birthright I do owe;
And, which is worse, no good excuse can show,
But that my wealth I have most idly spent!
My youth doth waste, my knowledge brings forth toys,
My wit doth strive those passions to defend,
Which for reward spoil it with vain annoys.
I see my course to lose myself doth bend;
I see, and yet no greater sorrow take
Than that I love no more for Stella's sake." *

But Stella's sovereignty was presently to come to an end. In language like that last quoted, we see evidence of the battle now waging. And it was not only against her tyranny that Sidney was rebelling, he was also struggling with what he knew to be a weak part of his own character. Liking well to be admired, he was often tempted to enchain the nobler parts of his nature, and please the Court which sued to him for pleasure, by becoming such a willing wearer of its

* *Astrophel and Stella*, sonnet xviii.

chains as his uncle the Earl of Leicester had been for years, as Sir Christopher Hatton now was, and as the young Earl of Essex was already beginning to be. But he fought against this temptation, and from the fighting there was to issue even nobler victory than could be bought by death upon the field of Zutphen.

CHAPTER XI.

AUTHORSHIP AS COURTIER.

1580—1582.

His leisure as a courtier Philip Sidney occupied in writing two books, not more worthy of note for the place they hold in literary history, than as illustrations of their author's character. "If his purpose had been to leave his memory in books," said the friend who knew him best, "I am confident, in the right use of logic, philosophy, history, poesy, nay even in the most ingenious of mechanical arts, he would have shown such traits of a searching and judicious spirit, as the professors of every faculty would have striven no less for him than the Seven Cities did to have Homer of their sept. But the truth is, his end was not writing, even while he wrote, but both his wit and understanding bent upon his heart to make himself and others, not in words or opinion, but in life and action, good and great."*

Yet, as in the world of politics, his courtly chains restrained him from attainment of the high and useful position for which he was most fit, so in the world of letters he was not yet able to do work as valuable or to

* Fulke Greville, *Life*.

exercise an influence as wholesome, as in later years. *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, albeit the offspring of strong brotherly love, shows plainly, in its style and purport, that it was the work of an Elizabethan courtier; and in *Astrophel and Stella* there is yet clearer evidence of the bondage to which the poet's noblest faculties were subject.

Sidney wrote *The Arcadia*, as we have seen, by his sister's wish. "You desired me to do it," he said in dedication, "and your desire to my heart is an absolute commandment." Perhaps the Countess of Pembroke merely urged upon him the employment of his mind in authorship; perhaps the whole first plan of the book was of her suggestion. At any rate, it was undertaken and continued not more for her brother's own pastime than for her amusement; "for severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled." The first portion was written under her roof; the rest, penned after Sidney's return to Court, was sent down to her, piece by piece, as the sheets were written. And for even that latter part the inspiration seems to have come most freely in the neighbourhood of Wilton. "When he was writing his *Arcadia*," we learn from Aubrey, "he was wont to take his table-book out of his pocket, and write down his notions as they came into his head, as he was hunting on Sarum's pleasant plains."* In the elaboration of his work, however, he evidently received much influence from the Court in which he

* "My great-uncle, Mr. T. Brown, remembered him," says Aubrey in support of his gossip.

gaily moved, and the literary Areopagus to which he may still have frequently resorted.

To some extent I imagine the *Arcadia* owed its existence to John Lyly, author of *Euphues*. Lyly was a year or two older than Sidney, though not matriculated at Oxford till about the date of the other's removal from the University. He commenced systematic attendance upon Queen Elizabeth, however, in the year of Sidney's return from Germany, and then the two must often have met. But they were of different tastes in literature, and of different parties at Court. Lyly's patron was the Earl of Oxford, and he pandered too much to that nobleman's love of foreign fashions in life and speech. His lot was a hard one, for after years of humble suit for employment, the post of Master of the Revels being the object of his ambition, he thus described the issue in a letter to the Queen: "Thirteen years your Highness's servant, but yet nothing: twenty friends that, though they say they will be sure, I find them sure to be slow: a thousand hopes, but all nothing: a hundred promises, but yet nothing. Thus, casting up the inventory of my friends, hopes, promises, and times, the *summa totalis* amounteth to just nothing. My last will is shorter than mine inventory; but three legacies,—patience to my creditors, melancholy without measure to my friends, and beggary without shame to my family."*

Lyly's greatest work, and one far too much abused when not wholly slighted, was *Euphues: the Anatomy*

* Lilly, *Dramatic Works*, ed. Fairholt, vol. i. p. xix.

of Wit. It appeared in 1579, and had for its theme the story of a young gentleman, who quitting his home in Athens to visit Naples, gave occasion for much witty and some very earnest writing concerning all that he did, and saw, and thought. But the wit was of the kind which, taking its name from this very book, is known as Euphuism, and the author often fell into the same vices of style which he essayed to ridicule. In the book there was real worth, which Sidney must have seen and acknowledged; but he could not fail also to see its weaker points. He knew that he could do better. I have no doubt that the reading of *Euphues* in 1579 led him many steps towards the writing of *The Arcadia* in 1580.

For the style and the subject of his book Sidney found in English literature no model. But in the works of some southern authors there were suggestions which he adopted. In his youth he had read diligently the Ethiopic History of Heliodorus, lately translated out of the Greek by Thomas Underdown, and he afterwards praised the old novelist for "his sugared invention of that picture of love in Theagenes and Chariclea."* Heliodorus doubtless inclined him to introduce a heroic element into his work; but its pastoral structure was evidently due to the recollection of Sannazzaro's Italian *Arcadia*, first printed at Milan in 1502. During the fifteenth century pastoral romances, most popular in Portugal, had been abundantly written; but Sannazzaro was the first man of real genius who adopted this mode

* *The Defence of Poesie* (ed. 1829), p. 72.

of composition. He wrote in a style which was simple, flowing, rapid, and harmonious; often too florid and diffuse, but with honest effort to restore to Italian the polish and purity introduced by Petrarch.* Sidney studied this work, and probably many others which appeared in imitation of it. To George of Montemayor, the Spanish precursor of Cervantes, however, his debt was largest. Out of this writer's *Diana*, published a few years previously, he had already translated a couple of fragments in verse, and he seems to have been much pleased with its laboured beauty of style, its intricacy of plot, and its richness of imagination. Yet *The Arcadia* differed essentially from all its predecessors. In every sense an original work, the beautiful thoughts with which it was filled were altogether Sidney's own.

For heroes he painted two cousins, Musidorus, Prince of Thessalia, and Pyrocles, Prince of Macedon; between whom there was such notable friendship "as made them more like than the likeness of all other virtues, and made them more near one to the other than the nearness of their blood could aspire unto." Pyrocles, being by three or four years the younger, showed reverence, full of love, to Musidorus, and Musidorus had a delight as full of love in Pyrocles. All that the elder knew he rejoiced to teach to the younger, and the younger cared to learn of none so much as of the elder. Thus living together from childhood, they grew to be equal in everything, and superior, as it seemed, to all others in the world.

* Salfi, cited by Hallam in his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe* (5th ed.), vol. i., pp. 265, 266.

When Musidorus was about twenty years of age, it was thought right that they should travel, and with that intent they left their Thessalian home. But before very long they were shipwrecked and separated. Musidorus, by good chance, being beaten by the waves on to that edge of the Laconian shore which is opposite to the island of Cithera, was rescued by two generous shepherds, Strephon and Claius, who brought back warmth and vigour to his almost lifeless body. At his intercession they took boat and sought to recover his friend. The attempt, however, was vain, and Musidorus in his grief would have killed himself, had not the shepherds stayed his hand, and persuaded him to go with them to the residence of Kalander, a gentle and noble man, whose hospitable and upright dealing caused all to love him, and who, if any could, would be able to comfort and advise the stranger.

Ere long they set out. "The third day after, in the time that the morning did strow roses and violets in the heavenly floor against the coming of the sun, the nightingales—striving one with the other which could in most dainty variety recount their wrong-caused sorrow—made them put off their sleep, and rising from under a tree, which that night had been their pavilion, they went on their journey, which by-and-by welcomed Musidorus's eyes, wearied with the wasted soil of Laconia, with delightful prospects. There were hills, which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble vallies, whose base estate seemed comforted with the presence of silver rivers; meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets which,

being lined with most pleasing shade, were witnessed so too by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds; each pasture stored with sheep feeding with sober security, while the pretty lambs with bleating oratory craved the dam's comfort; here a shepherd's boy piping as though he should never be old; there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing—and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music. As for the houses of the country,—for many houses came under their eye,—they were all scattered, no two being one by the other,—yet not so far off as that it barred mutual succour; a show, as it were, of an accompanible solitariness and of a civil wildness."

Such was Arcadia. Next we have a description of Kalander's abode, Sidney's ideal of a house. "The house itself was built of fair and strong stone, not affecting so much any extraordinary kind of fineness, as an honourable representing of a firm stateliness. The lights, doors, and stairs, rather directed to the use of the guest than the eye of the artificer, and yet, as the one chiefly heeded, so the other not neglected. Each place handsome without curiosity, and homely without loathsomeness, not so dainty as not to be trod on, nor yet slubbered up with good fellowship; all more lasting than beautiful, but that the consideration of the exceeding lastingness made the eye believe it was exceeding beautiful. The servants, not so many in number, as cleanly in apparel and serviceable in behaviour, testifying even in their countenances that their master took as well care to be served as of them that did serve."

In that way the story opens. Musidorus—who introduced himself as Palladius, and spoke of his friend Pyrocles as Daiphantus—became an inmate of Kalander's house, and the kind treatment of his host did much to deaden his sorrow and to fill him with hopeful, happy thoughts. The good old man, on the other hand, felt a strong fatherly love for the youth, finding in him "a mind of most excellent composition, a piercing wit quite void of ostentation, high erected thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy, an eloquence as sweet in the uttering as it was slow to come to the uttering, and a behaviour so noble as gave a majesty to adversity." Thus loved, Musidorus thought that he wanted nothing to complete his enjoyment save the presence of his friend. Soon he was to find him.

News came that Kalander's son Clitophon, joining in the Lacedemonian war against the Helots, had been made prisoner. The father was so overcome with grief that he could do nothing. But Musidorus, anxious for adventure, and anxious to make some return for his host's kindness towards him, gathered an army of Arcadians and went against the servile foes. A long and deadly battle ensued. Musidorus, brave himself to desperation, saw with astonishment the wonderful bravery of the captain of the Helots, and the captain had like wonder about Musidorus. "It was hard to say whether he more liked his doings, or misliked the effect of his doings." It could not but be that two such heroes should meet and try each other's strength. "Their courage was guided with skill, and their skill was armed with courage; neither did their hardness darken their

wit, nor their wit cool their hardness; both valiant, as men despising death; both confident, as men despising to be overcome; yet doubtful by their present feeling, and respectful by what they had already seen. Their feet steady, their hands diligent, their eyes watchful, and their hearts resolute. The parts either not armed or weakly armed were well known,—and, according to the knowledge, should have been sharply visited, but that the answer was as quick as the objection. The smart bred rage, and the rage bred smart again, till both sides beginning to wax faint, and rather desirous to die accompanied, than hopeful to live victorious, the captain of the Helots, with a blow whose violence grew of fury, not of strength, or of strength proceeding of fury, struck Musidorus upon the side of the head, that he reeled astonished; and withal the helmet fell off, he remaining bareheaded." Great was the surprise of all, both friends and foes, when the captain, instead of following up his advantage, knelt down before his antagonist, saying he would rather be his prisoner than any other's general. Musidorus was lost in astonishment, until his vanquisher exclaimed, "What! hath Palladius forgotten the voice of Daiphantus?"

These, it will be remembered, were the assumed names of Musidorus and Pyrocles. The state of affairs was complicated, but not too much so for the romancer to unravel. Pyrocles explained the course of adventures by which he had become the unwilling leader of the Helots: and now after bringing them back to peace with the Spartans, he released Clitophon and repaired to the house of Kalander. Between him and Musidorus there

was much loving converse with interchange of their several histories. Among the rest, Musidorus told a strange story which he had heard from Kalander, concerning Basilius, the Prince of Arcadia, and his family.

Basilius, though not a very wise, courageous, or magnificent man, was, in most particulars, meek, courteous, and merciful. His wife, Gynecia, was a woman of great wit and beauty, and displayed more princely temper than her husband. But the grace was with their daughters, Pamela and Philoclea. "When I marked them both methought there was (if, at least, such perfections may receive the word of more) more sweetness in Philoclea, but more majesty in Pamela: methought love played in Philoclea's eyes, and threatened in Pamela's: methought Philoclea's beauty only persuaded, but so persuaded as all hearts must yield; Pamela's beauty used violence, and such violence as no heart could resist. And it seems that such proportion is between their minds. Philoclea, so bashful as though her excellences had stolen into her before she was aware; so humble that she will put all pride out of countenance; in sum, such proceeding as will stir hope, but teach hope good manners: Pamela, of high thoughts, who avoids not pride by not knowing her excellences, but by making it one of her excellences to be void of pride." It was in a wild fit of jealous care for these daughters that Basilius had broken up his Court and retired into a forest hard by, and had there built two lodges. In one he now dwelt, with his wife and Philoclea; in the other he placed the elder sister, under the keeping of one

Dametas, an arrant doltish clown, his ugly spouse Miso, and their horrid daughter Mopsa, inheritor of both parents' defects. To this miserable family the whole management of the maidens was assigned, the Prince maintaining his authority on one point only, that so long as he lived they should find no husbands. With that purpose he shut out all men, except a priest and some shepherds skilled in the music which he loved.

To this story Pyrocles listened with eager and retentive ears. Becoming moody and silent, he wandered often in the woods; and thereat Musidorus, though he saw not its secret, was much displeased. He urged that they should leave Arcadia, and return to the busier life of Thessalia. Pyrocles, however, would not hear of it, and spoke in eloquent tones of the sweets of a pastoral life. "I think you will make me see," said Musidorus, scoffingly, "that the vigour of your wit can show itself in any subject; or else you feed sometimes your solitariness with the conceits of the poets when they put such words in the mouths of one of these fantastical, mind-infected people, that children and musicians call lovers!" "And what, dear cousin," answered Pyrocles, "if I be not so much the poet, the freedom of whose pen can exercise itself in anything, as even that miserable subject of his cunning whereof you speak?" "Now, the eternal gods forbid," shouted Musidorus, "that ever my ears should be poisoned with so evil news of you!"

Yet it was true; and true, also, that Musidorus, like every other rash talker who runs tilt with Cupid, had very soon to make confession that he also was a willing

slave to love. But this was after Pyrocles, alarmed by his harsh words, had fled from him ; and after both, wandering apart, had met with many adventures which cannot here be recounted. It is enough to say that the friends, in the end, met and renewed their vows of friendship on the outskirts of the territory from which the Prince of Arcadia had banned all intruders. Pyrocles, however, calling himself Zelmane, was now dressed like a beautiful Amazon, and as such he was regarded by all save Musidorus. And Musidorus hid his real character from every eye and ear but those of Pyrocles, under the name of Dorus, and the garb of a shepherd. With the help of these disguises they were quickly able to gain entrance into the forbidden region ; and their worth, being such as could nowhere and nohow be long concealed, soon became apparent, and won for them the favour of the whole company.

But their new positions were not easy ones to occupy. The perplexities of the lovers, and the perils through which they had to pass in working onward to their end, form the main subject of Sidney's romance.

Musidorus loved Pamela, but he dared not tell her so; and, that he might gain approach to her, he was forced to profess affection for her ugly keeper, Mopsa. Rightly trusting to his graceful bearing and courteous speech, however, he in time bred in Pamela such tenderness towards him, that "she could no longer keep love from looking out through her eyes or going forth in her words." He was quick in discerning this, yet it gave him little comfort. Pamela, thinking that he loved Mopsa, and blaming herself for the feelings which she

could not overcome, would never listen to his suit, or allow him opportunity for telling what were his real thoughts, and what was his real station.

Of that sort were the storms of love that beat on Musidorus. With Pyrocles, for long, things fared still worse. Loving Philoclea, he was taken by her for the warlike lady whose garb he affected, and therefore she had for him only a sisterly affection; whereas, Basilius, being deceived about his sex, regarded him with a far stronger liking. Nor was this complication enough. Gynecia, also, her practised eye seeing through his Amazonian dress, cared for him more than sorted with her wifely duty. Rarely could he seek the society of Philoclea without being held back either by the ardent passion of the father, who courted him as a maiden, or by the watchful jealousy of the mother, who would win him as a man. It was hard for him to gain access to the daughter's society, even in the presence of her attendants. Yet he wooed her cunningly. After telling, as though they were another's, of the great things which he himself had done, he contrived to quicken in Philoclea a hearty admiration for the unknown knight; and at last, when once, after long waiting, he found himself alone with her, he ventured to tell her that he was not a woman, but that same knight disguised through love of her. Philoclea listened with surprise, but not with anger, and presently the surprise issued in happiness.

In Sidney's romance, the unravelling of those entanglements occupies very many pages; and some exciting interludes, adding further to the complication of the

story, are inserted. At one time, the wicked lady Cecropia succeeded in a plot by which she captured Zelmane,—whose real name, it will be remembered, was Pyrocles,—Philoclea, and Pamela, and lodged them in her own castle; thinking thereby to further her ambitious schemes against Basilius, and so gratify her hatred for Gynecia. Her husband, when living, had been brother to the Prince of Arcadia, whom now she sought to depose, with the view of setting up her son Amphialus as Prince, herself being real governor. Amphialus, better than his mother, knew nothing of the capture, or of the wicked thoughts which prompted it, until it had been effected. He had long loved Philoclea, and for this the Amazonian Zelmane, in unwomanly jealousy, had lately wounded him. Now, however, though Philoclea's presence added fuel to his passions, he was not base enough to woo with violence. Cecropia, despising love and scorning chastity, condemned him for such weakness; but, rather than see him afflicted, she volunteered to urge his suit. "Therefore she went softly to Philoclea's chamber, and peeping through the side of the door, then being a little open, she saw Philoclea sitting low upon a cushion, in such a given-over manner, that one would have thought silence, solitariness, and melancholy were come there, under the ensign of mishap, to conquer delight, and drive him from his natural seat of beauty. Her tears came dropping down like rain in sunshine, and she, not taking heed to wipe the tears, they hung upon her cheeks and lips, as upon cherries which the dropping tree bedeweth. In the dressing of her hair and

apparel she might see neither a careful art nor an art of carefulness, but even left to a neglected chance, which yet could no more unperfect her perfections, than a die, any way cast, could lose his squareness."

Let those descriptive sentences serve for specimens of Sidney's style at its worst; but no fault can be found with the exquisite picture of pure, noble-minded womanliness, as shown in Philoclea's resistance of all the insidious attacks, the cunning persuasions, the hard threatenings, which were directed against her. Cecropia was altogether baffled; she would willingly have revenged herself, but that she saw how, by hurting Philoclea, she would be only bringing trouble to her son. She thought, however, that one maiden would do as well as another for Amphialus, and that he would be well pleased if she could win for him some yielding mistress, instead of this disdaining beauty. Therefore, fortified with stronger arguments than ever, she betook herself to Pamela's chamber, but waited at the door, as she had done when visiting Philoclea, to see if some circumstance would arise favourable to her intended discourse. Watching thus, she saw Pamela, walking up and down like one moved by deep, though patient thoughts. "For her look and countenance was settled, her pace soft and almost still, of one measure, without any passionate gesture or violent motion, till at length, as it were awakening and strengthening herself, 'Well,' she said, 'yet this is the best; and of this I am sure, that, however they wrong me, they cannot overmaster God. No darkness blinds His eyes: no gaol bars Him out:

to whom else should I fly but to Him for succour?' And therefore, kneeling down, even where she stood, she thus said, 'O All-seeing Light and Eternal Life of all things, to Whom nothing is either so great that it may resist, or so small that it is contemned; look upon my misery with Thine eye of mercy, and let Thine infinite power vouchsafe to limit out some proportion of deliverance unto me, as to Thee shall be most convenient. Let not injury, O Lord, triumph over me, and let my faults by Thy hand be corrected, and make not mine unjust enemy the minister of Thy justice. But yet, my God, if, in Thy wisdom, this be the aptest chastisement for my unexcusable folly, if this low bondage be fitted for my over high desires, if the pride of my not enough humble heart be thus to be broken, O Lord, I yield unto Thy will, and joyfully embrace what sorrow Thou wilt have me suffer. Only thus much let me crave of Thee: let my craving, O Lord, be accepted of Thee, since even that proceeds from Thee; let me crave, even by the noblest title which in my greatest affliction I may give myself, that I am Thy creature, and by Thy goodness, which is Thyself, that Thou will suffer some beam of Thy majesty so to shine into my mind that it may still depend constantly upon Thee. Let calamity be the exercise, but not the overthrow of my virtue; let their power prevail, but prevail not to destruction. Let my greatness be their prey; let my pain be the sweetness of their revenge; let them, if so it seem good unto Thee, vex me with more and more punishment; but, O Lord, let never their wickedness have such a hand but that I may carry a pure mind in a pure body.'

And pausing awhile, 'And O most gracious Lord,' said she, 'whatever becomes of me, preserve the virtuous Musidorus.'"*

Such a prayer as this of Pamela's could be powerless upon none. "Even the hard-hearted wickedness of Cecropia, if it found not a love of that goodness, yet it felt an abasement at that goodness; and if she had not a kindly remorse, yet had she an irksome accusation of her own naughtiness, so that she was put from the bias of her fore-intended lesson." Something she did say at this time, and much on other days; but of course she received no answer save scornful reproof.

Virtue was a sure defence to the oppressed maidens, a truer helper than the Arcadian army, which often fought bravely for their rescue, but as often failed. Of the warfare there is lengthy description: a part of which may serve as illustration of much else of Sidney's writing, pleasant notwithstanding its extravagance of word and thought. "After the terrible salutation of warlike noise, the shaking of hands was with sharp weapons. Some lances, according to the metal they met and skill of the guider, did stain themselves in blood; some flew up in pieces, as if they would threaten heaven because they failed on earth. But their office was quickly inherited, either by the prince of weapons the sword, or by some heavy mace or biting axe, which, hunting still the weakest chase, sought ever to light there where smallest resistance might worse prevent mischief. The clashing of armour, and crushing of

* This is the prayer which the author of the *Ikon Basilike* put into the mouth of King Charles the First.

staves, the jostling of bodies, the resounding of blows, was the first part of that ill-agreeing music which was beautified with the grisliness of wounds, the rising of dust, the hideous falls, and the groans of the dying. The very horses, angry in their masters' anger, with love and obedience brought forth the effects of hate and resistance, and, with minds of servitude, did as if they affected glory. Some lay dead under their dead masters, whom unknightly wounds had unjustly punished for a faithful duty. Some lay upon their lords by like accidents, and in death had the honour to be borne by them whom in life they had borne. Some, having lost their commanding burthens, ran scattered about the field, abashed with the madness of mankind. The earth itself, wont to be a burial of men, was now, as it were, buried with men; so was the face thereof hidden with dead bodies, to whom death had come marked in divers manners. In one place lay disinherited heads, dispossessed of their natural seignories; in another, whole bodies to see to, but that their hearts, wont to be bound all over so close, were now with deadly violence opened; in others, fouler deaths had uglily displayed their trailing guts. There lay arms, whose fingers yet moved, as if they would feel for him that made them feel; and legs which, contrary to common reason, by being discharged of their burden were grown heavier. But no sword paid so large a tribute of souls to the eternal kingdom as that of Amphialus, who, like a tiger from whom a company of wolves did seek to ravish a new gotten prey, so he, remembering they came to take away Philoclea, did labour to make valour, strength,

choler, and hatred, to answer the proportion of his love, which was infinite."

Very skilful is the rehearsal of the contest on a later day, in which Amphialus slew the famous Argalus, fair Parthenia, best and truest of wives, tending her husband in his death; of the still later contest which the same Amphialus had with one who came as a stranger knight to revenge the fate of Argalus, and who, when the death-wound had been given, proved to be none other than Parthenia; and of the deep, stern lesson which thus he learnt of the mischief that must ever come from warring in an unholy warfare. Never, he thought, would it have fallen to him blindly to have stricken down so excellent a lady, had he not been battling for a wrongful cause and in pursuance of an impure love.

But Cecropia's heart was not moved. Her son's suffering only heightened her cruelty, and added to the wickedness of the treatment she gave to her three captives, Philoclea, Pamela, and Zelmane. The story of it all is wearisome.

Sidney himself seems to have grown weary of his work. At this point there is an entire break in the narrative, and the remaining quarter of the book exists to us in a much less finished state than the three quarters from which I have drawn the preceding extracts. Indeed, we are told that the remainder was never so much as seen by its author, after he sent away the loose sheets to his sister. "Yet for that it was his," we learn, "howsoever deprived of the just grace it should have had, it was held too good to be lost, and

therefore with much labour were the best coherences that could be gathered out of those scattered papers made only by her noble care to whose dear hand they were first committed, and for whose delight and entertainment only they were undertaken."

At the resuming of the story we find peace in Arcadia —Zelmane, Philoclea, and Pamela, being restored to Basilius. Yet matters were not altogether as they ought to have been. Musidorus was still suffering indignity in his disguise as a shepherd, and Pyrocles unwillingly continued to be loved, in his Amazonian dress, by the King, and, in his discovered manhood, by the Queen. Each youth had won the pure liking of the maiden whom he purely loved; but how further were they to proceed? The elder of the two solved the difficulty by persuading Pamela to flee with him to his home, and to become Duchess of Thessalia. But Pyrocles remained, "loathsomely loved and dangerously loving." He, however, found bold means for ending his perplexity. Promising gratification of their unchaste desires to both Basilius and Gynecia, he contrived lawfully to deceive them both, and to bring them to the unwitting enjoyment of each other's society; and thus he was left alone to the possession of Philoclea's love. Many perils attended the working out and the issue of this device, and they are lengthily recounted in the romance; but containing less that is either interesting or wholesome than any other part of *The Arcadia*, they need not be here repeated.

Sidney never properly completed the romance. On the

last page he hastily wound up his complicated narrative. Basilius was brought back to his right mind, in respect both of his kingly office and of his domestic duty. Abandoning his unmanly seclusion, he exercised a wise rule over Arcadia, and returned to his former pure affection for his wife. Gynecia also, surrendering her evil thoughts, received and partly deserved most honourable fame throughout the world; all, save Pyrocles and Philoclea, who never betrayed her, thinking that she was the perfect mirror of wifely love, "which, though in that point undeserved, she did, in the remnant of her life, duly purchase with observing all duty and faith, to the example and glory of Greece; so uncertain are mortal judgments, the same person most infamous and most famous, and neither justly." Sidney's closing sentence indicates the matters which he doubtless originally intended to have presented with great fulness. Concerning Musidorus and Pyrocles, he said: "The solemnities of their marriages with the Arcadian pastorals, full of many comical adventures happening to those rural lovers, the strange stories of Artaxia and Plexirtus, Erona and Plangus, Hellen and Amphialus, with the wonderful chances that befel them; the shepherdish loves of Menalcas with Kalodulus's daughter; the poor hopes of the poor Philisides"—that being the name by which Sidney referred to himself—"in the pursuit of his affections; the strange continuance of Claius and Strephon's desire; lastly the son of Pyrocles, named Pyrophilus, and Melidora, the fair daughter of Pamela, by Musidorus, who even at their birth entered into admirable fortunes, may awake some

other spirit to exercise his pen in that wherewith mine is already dulled."

It is not much to be wondered at that Sidney's spirit was dulled. The work was already far too long, and in it there were very many faults, by no one else so clearly seen and condemned as by the author. He thought too poorly of it to suffer it to be printed in his lifetime, and on his death-bed he desired that it might be burned. That this request was not complied with is ground for very real satisfaction. The good that was in *The Arcadia* greatly overbalanced the bad. It had some memorable lessons to teach to the world, and it taught them very effectually. But, in praising it, we must never forget that Sidney himself, in his matured years, saw reason for greatly dispraising it, and that it has lived only through the loving zeal of the sister for whom it was so lovingly prepared. Indeed we cannot fully judge of the merits of the work as left by its author. To fit it for presentment to the world, we are told that the Countess of Pembroke did much, and that "as often, repairing a ruinous house, the mending of some old part occasioneth the making of some new, so here her honourable labour began in correcting the faults, and ended in supplying the defects."* Many faults remain, and it is even possible that some of them were the work of the correcting hand.

One great error of *The Arcadia*, however, was in its original design. The mixing up of classical fable with chivalrous romance, and the reflection therein of many

* The *Address to the Reader* prefixed to the early editions.

contemporary incidents, could not but produce serious confusion and contradiction. The pastoral and the heroic sort ill with one another. For combining them, Sidney had the precedent of all the Spanish and Italian romances which helped him in his work, but his own good sense and literary judgment were shown in his determination, if life and inclination had remained with him, to undo the whole story, and retain only such parts of it as would fit into a strictly historical romance with King Arthur for its hero. That was a scheme admirably suited to the full unfolding of his genius, and one upon which he could not have failed to write wonderfully well. But that design he was never able to fulfil.

In the laboured character of its details, and in its often extravagant style of thought and phrase, there is, also, ground for condemning *The Arcadia*. Overstraining, however, was a leading attribute of all studied prose writing in Sidney's day, with almost the single exception of his own *Defence of Poesie*. It makes up nearly all the substance of Lyly's *Euphues* written in 1579. In plot, of course, there is hardly room for comparison between Sidney's and Lyly's works. While *The Arcadia* was professedly an elaborate fiction, *Euphues* was designed to contain all sorts of prudent counsel and sharp satire, shaped as flesh around the dry skeleton of a tale. Lyly followed the example adopted by many of the scholastic successors of Boethius. His work was in a measure well done; there is always much good sense to be found in his quaint, extravagant sentences; but undoubtedly Sidney's mode of teaching was wiser, and his style of writing purer. Both authors

wished to enforce the noblest thoughts that were in them. But *The Arcadia* contains very little of direct moralization, and, in the constant flow of description, the writer's mind is left to make an undefined yet strong impression upon the reader; whereas the thoughts of *Euphues* lose all their energy and influence in the teacher's persistent effort to present them most forcibly and discernibly. Enough has been quoted to show Sidney's method. A few sentences, neither better nor worse than the rest of the book, will suffice for illustration of Lyly's style of teaching.

"Let not gentlewomen," he says, "make too much of their painted sheath, let them not be so curious in their own conceit, or so currish to their royal lovers. When the black crow's foot shall appear in their eye or the black ox tread on their foot, when their beauty shall be like the blasted rose, their wealth wasted, their bodies worn, their faces wrinkled, their fingers crooked, who will like of them in their age who loved none in their youth? If you will be cherished when you be old, be courteous while you be young; if you look for comfort in your hoary hairs, be not coy when you have your golden locks; if you would be imbraced in the waning of your bravery, be not squeamish in the wearing of your beauty: if you desire to be kept like the roses, when they have lost their colour, smell sweet as the rose doth in the bud; if you would be tasted for old wine, be in the mouth a pleasant grape; so shall you be cherished for your courtesy, comforted for your honesty, embraced for your amity; so shall you be preserved with the sweet rose and drunk with the pleasant wine." *

In *The Arcadia*, as in *Euphues*, there was much sober teaching by good and bad example, and by implied satire. The book may possibly have been intended to be, as one old critic called it, "a continual grove of

* *Euphues* (ed. 1579), fo. 13.

morality, shadowing moral and political results under the plain and easy emblems of lovers." * But the assertion of many others of its admirers, that it contained a complete allegorical view of the age, is certainly erroneous. It is not at all to be believed that Sidney meant to vaunt his own merits under the name of Pyrocles, or to compliment his friend Fulke Greville by presenting him as Musidorus, or to show his sister's virtue in the praise of Pamela, or to put false painting upon Lady Rich in the portrait of Philoclea, or to typify his father in Euarchus, or to defame Queen Mary of Scotland in his rehearsal of Cecropia's wickedness.

Having commenced his romance in the summer of 1580, I infer that Sidney had written about three-quarters of the whole, and all which has come down to us in a finished state, by the autumn of 1581. On the 30th of September in that year Languet died, and in the concluding eclogue of the third book of *The Arcadia* we meet with the affectionate praise of the honest Huguenot to which reference has been made. It is reasonable to suppose that the eulogy was penned soon after the event which called it forth. Indeed the entire work, though no allegory is to be found in it, gives clear evidence of the author's varying mood at the various periods of his writing. The earlier portions, composed at Wilton and in the immediate company of the Countess of Pembroke, have all the graceful flow of fancy, the fulness of pastoral imagery, the buoyancy of happy, innocent thought, which might be expected to mark the time of

* *The Life and Death of Sir Philip Sidney.*

Sidney's retirement from Court and participation in the rich joys of true domestic life. The middle part—written, as I conclude, after his return to the world of courtly gaiety—is equally in harmony with the scenes and circumstances of its authorship. In it there is more strength of literary power, but the theme is far less inviting. Some episodes are of exquisite beauty ; but the substance of the tale, including the endless description of Cecropia's abode and the things done in it, is dull and tedious. There is utterance of dainty conceits like these :—

> " My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
> By just exchange, one for the other given ;
> I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss ;
> There never was a better bargain driven.
>
> " His heart in me keeps me and him in one ;
> My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides.
> He loves my heart, for once it was his own ;
> I cherish his because in me it bides." *

But there is as true an echo of the writer's mind, weary of the life which he seemed forced to lead, in such mournful verse as this upon a lute :—

> " The world doth yield such ill consorted shows,
> With circled course, which no wise stay can try,
> That childish stuff, which knows not friends from foes,
> (Better despised) bewonders gazing eye.
> Thus noble gold down to the bottom goes,
> When worthless cork aloft doth floating lie.
> Thus in thyself least strings are loudest found,
> And lowest stops do yield the highest sound." †

* *Arcadia* (ed. 1655), pp. 357, 358.
† Ibid., p. 370.

Or this :—

"Beauty hath force to catch the human sight :
Sight doth bewitch the fancy ill awaked ;
Fancy, we feel, includes all passion's might ;
Passion, rebell'd, oft reason's strength hath shaked.

"No wonder then, though sight my sight did taint,
And though thereby my fancy was infected,
Though, yoked so, my mind, with sickness faint,
Had reason's weight for passion's ease rejected.

"But now the fit is past, and time hath given
Leisure to weigh what due desert requireth.
All thoughts so sprung are from their dwelling driven,
And wisdom to his wonted seat aspireth,
Crying, in me, 'Eye-hopes deceitful prove ;
Things rightly prized, love is the band of love.'" *

That cry of Wisdom we know to have been heard through many groans of passion in Sidney's own short life. In the fourth and fifth books of *The Arcadia*, brief and disjointed as we have them, we have the foretaste of many of his thoughts at a later period. His journey to Flanders, in the early spring of 1582, must have interrupted his literary work. After that there was a marked change in his temper. Honest purposes were rising in him which little accorded with many sentiments in the half-written romance. Hastily, and with not much satisfaction to himself, he finished it as briefly as he could ; spoiling the perfection of the story, but very beautifully showing how his own nature was being perfected. Thus solemnly and grandly, when his tale was almost ended, did he sum up and enforce some

* *Arcadia*, p. 375.

teaching of the wisdom now fully his own, upon the deepest of all earthly mysteries :—

"Since nature's works be good, and death doth serve
As nature's work, why should we fear to die?
Since fear is vain but when it may preserve,
Why should we fear that which we cannot fly?
"Fear is more pain than is the pain it fears,
Disarming human minds of native might;
While each conceit an ugly figure bears
Which were not ill, well viewed in reason's light.
"Our owly eyes, which dimmed with passions be,
And scarce discern the dawn of coming day,
Let them be cleared, and now begin to see
Our life is but a step in dusty way.
Then let us hold the bliss of peaceful mind:
Since, feeling this, great loss we cannot find." *

Of sonnets, besides those scattered through *The Arcadia*, Sidney wrote a hundred and twenty-five, if not more. A hundred and eight are included in his *Astrophel and Stella*, a collection of poems, half true and half fictitious, composed during about the same period as that covered by the prose romance. From it I have already quoted many passages, in indication of the state of Sidney's mind and heart.

He followed too much the example of his immediate predecessors, the chief of them being Wyatt and Surrey. Sir Thomas Wyatt, the elder, who died in 1540, had helped to set the fashion of travelling in Italy, and of coming back to imitate the strains of Petrarch and Ariosto. Both fashions were further enforced by the more splendid manners and the finer genius of Henry

* *Arcadia*, p. 457.

Howard, Earl of Surrey. Surrey, distantly connected by family with Sidney, showed some chance likeness to him in the brilliancy of his life and the prematureness of his death. In January, 1547, before he had ended his thirtieth year, he was executed on the foolish charge of having assumed the arms of Edward the Confessor, and thereby laid claim to royalty. Yet he lived long enough to plant firmly in England the Italian sonnet, and the still more recently invented blank verse of Italy. The Italian influence was not here first exerted upon our literature. Long before, Chaucer had borrowed much and wisely from Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Dante, and Lidgate and his companions had willingly enslaved themselves to the example of the southern poets. But this early imitation showed itself chiefly in the production of long prosaic epics, and in the repetition of short and often immoral fables; and before the dawning of the sixteenth century the epics, if not the fables, had become wearisome to English readers. There was a charm of novelty in the sonnets of Wyatt and Surrey, some of them translated, the rest closely imitated, from Petrarch and Petrarch's extravagant copyists. The great Italian had sung sweetly to his Laura; and there were numbers, both in and out of Italy, eager to outvie him in his vows and protestations. Whoever the fair Geraldine may have been, and whatever sway she may have had over Surrey, his love-poems were of the sort to take strong hold of every courtly mind. In Sidney's youth, numbers were multiplying fantastic and delicate conceits, and the fashion prevailed after he was dead. Perhaps no one so fairly illustrates it as Henry Constable, a year or

two his junior. Rich in true poetry, Constable's verse abounds in evidence of the absurd style of the day. Within the limits of a single sonnet, his lady's eye is at once a glass where he beholds his heart, the keen point of a murdering dart with which she "always hits his heart, and never shoots awry," and a fire which would burn him up, were not his eye a river to prevent absolute annihilation, and to keep him in a state of boiling misery. In another, her glove gives occasion for this apostrophe :—

> "Sweet hand! the sweet yet cruel bow thou art,
> From whence at me five ivory arrows fly;
> So with five wounds at once I wounded lie,
> Bearing in breast the print of every dart."

In that school Sidney learnt to write sonnets. Often he gave full proof of having caught the infection of the time; often he wrote in far healthier way than any around him, save just one or two, could equal. To the English sonnet he imparted an energy and moral purpose never before shown, but rarely did he write with the perfect freedom of a true master of poesy.

From *Astrophel and Stella* I have already quoted enough in illustration of Sidney's wooing of Lady Rich, and of his place at Court. Let this sonnet, however, be read, as containing, perhaps more than any other of his composing, trace of the vicious style of his time :—

> "Queen Virtue's Court, which some call Stella's face,
> Prepared by nature's choicest furniture,
> Hath his front built of alabaster pure;
> Gold is the covering of that stately place;

"The door by which, sometimes, comes forth her grace,
Red porphyr is, which lock of pearl makes sure,
Whose porches rich, which name of cheeks endure,
Marble, mixed red and white, do interlace;
"The windows now, through which this heavenly guest
Looks o'er the world and can find nothing such
Which dare claim from those lights the name of best,
Of touch they are that, without touch, doth touch,
Which Cupid's self, from Beauty's mind did draw;
Of touch they are—and poor I am their straw!" *

And, on the other hand, let this be taken as one of the most poetical of Sidney's sonnets.

"Come Sleep, O Sleep! the certain knot of peace,
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the press
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw;
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.
"Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head;
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see." †

Sidney was a better poet after the last sonnet in *Astrophel and Stella* had been penned. Pervading the work is an unhealthy tone, lessening the pleasure with which we regard even those passages that are really beautiful. If in reading *The Arcadia* we are sometimes

* *Astrophel and Stella*, sonnet ix.
† Ibid, sonnet xxxix.

reminded of the hindrance offered to Sidney's higher nature by the fascinations of Court-life, we see much more to lament in the misguided thoughts and perverted purposes of which there is evidence in his sonnets about Lady Rich. They are no whit more poetical because they tell us of a heart perplexed and tortured—because the strains with gayest sound have no echo of real happiness—because those in which he acknowledges his misery are so very full of wretchedness. Strength and honour came when that cry of wisdom, of which he sang so worthily in *The Arcadia*, was bravely listened to and obeyed; but, before reason had vanquished folly, and virtue had stifled passion, what a bitterness of grief oppressed him!

"Oft have I mused, but now at length I find,
Why those that die, men say 'they do depart.'
Depart! a word so gentle to my mind,
Weakly did seem to paint Death's ugly dart.
But, now the stars, with their strange course, do bind
Me one to leave with whom I leave my heart,
I hear a cry of spirits, faint and blind,
That, parting thus, my chiefest part I part.

"Part of my life, the loathed part to me,
Lives to impart my weary clay some breath;
But that good part, wherein all comforts be,
Now dead, doth show departure is a death;
Yea, worse than death: death parts both woe and joy;
From joy I part, still living in annoy." *

* *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 340.

CHAPTER XII.

NEW PROJECTS AND NEW DUTIES.

1582—1584.

During the two years subsequent to Philip Sidney's return from attendance upon the Duke of Anjou in Flanders, many matters of interest arose to occupy his thoughts and prevent him from being engrossed in the idle gaieties of the Elizabethan Court. With some features in the Queen's character, while he grew in respect for all that was really great in her, he was ever seeing fresh reason for being dissatisfied. All the circumstances connected with the Duke's courtship joined to teach him some memorable lessons. But the truth was yet more clearly reflected in the treatment accorded to his own father: and to his father's concerns Philip was now giving especial heed.

Towards the end of April, Edmund Molineux came to him at Court, with a strange proposal from Sir Henry Sidney. At this time there was great talk about the appointment of Sir Henry for the fourth time to the Lord Deputyship of Ireland, in the place of Lord Grey of Wilton, presently to be recalled. Sir Henry sent to say that he was willing to go, if Philip would consent to go with him as his agent, and, when he returned, to stay in Ireland, with her Majesty's permission, as his

successor. Should Philip consent to this, his father enumerated three other conditions which he wished him to set before both Queen and Council. In the first place, the Lord President claimed from her Majesty a public acknowledgment that he had done as good service for Ireland as any other rulers before or since; in other words, he required of her an apology for her unreasonable misconstruing of his motives, and disparagement of his abilities. As a second point, he urged that he ought to have a title of nobility, with an adequate grant of landed property; so that all might know he was well thought of at Court, and might accordingly be induced to yield to his authority. Sir Henry's last request was that, if again sent to Ireland, he might go rather as Lord Lieutenant than as Lord Deputy.*

It would not at all have sorted with Philip's temperament for him to go as under-governor to Ireland. I imagine that he at once showed to his father's agent the inexpedience of the proposal, as well as the impossibility of persuading the Queen to bestow on Sir Henry such large gifts and such arbitrary powers. The project, of which we hear no more, seems to have been at once abandoned. The father and son, however, were much together during these summer months. Both were labouring diligently to obtain from the Queen some part of the recompence which was due.

Sir Henry Sidney's was one of those quiet, unboastful

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Irish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xcii. No. 36. *Sidney Papers*, vol. i., pp. 295, 296.

lives which are apt to be slighted in their own time, and by later generations to be quite forgotten. Yet Queen Elizabeth had few better servants than he, and he had fairly earned far more reward than he claimed.

During a period of twelve years his chief employment had been in Ireland. There, by his hard and painful work, he had contracted the malady which enfeebled him, and made him prematurely old. Of Ireland he had been four times Lord Justice. Thrice he had been Lord Deputy: "and in every of the three times," he said, "I sustained a great and a violent rebellion, every one of which I subdued, and with honourable peace left the country in quiet." In the first instance he dispersed the forces of Shane O'Neil, and fixed the rebel's head on the top of Dublin Castle. In the second he guided the English cause triumphantly through the dangers of the Butlers' war. In the third he did all in his power towards removing the commotions caused by the Earl of Clanricarde. Bravely using the sword when needful, he had, however, sought rather to conquer the wild natives in peaceful ways. He was wont, as often as he could, to invite their leading men to visit him, in order that he might win their personal esteem, and might set them a good example, we are told, of civility, of comeliness in habit, and of cleanliness in person. From his first arrival he began to give offence to many of the nobility, and to Queen Elizabeth, who sided with them, by causing the old statute of Coyne and Livery to be revived and duly executed; but the common people blessed him for it, for thereby fair measure of taxation was set upon all

alike, and prompt relief afforded to thousands who had till now been grievously oppressed and often impoverished to starvation. That justice might more readily be done to the whole nation, he caused presidents and judges to be appointed for the distant parts, just as had long been the case in Wales, and he was very careful to see that all causes were tried with the very least delay. He procured the appointment of the offices of Attorney-General and Solicitor-General in Ireland.

For the furtherance of justice, again, he split up the country into shires, in place of the old division into provinces, and took care that fit sheriffs were appointed. For the first time in the annals of the country he drew up a proper schedule of imposts upon wines and other articles of trade. That the government might in all ways have due respect, he rebuilt Dublin Castle, then in ruins, and drove out from it the vile persons who hitherto had made it their especial haunt. He restored the ruined town of Athenry. By constructing the bridge of Athlone over the Shannon he brought Connaught a great deal nearer than it had ever been before. He helped to frighten rebellion out of Ulster by strongly fortifying Carrickfergus, and he set up a warning for all Ireland in the stout prison of Mullingar. We are also told of many other great works which he effected, and of many more to which he gave beginning.

In other matters he was not less careful. Finding the records of the kingdom exposed to wind and rain and damp, so utterly neglected even that they were used for waste paper, he lost no time in appointing suitable

persons to read them all through with care; and then, selecting one of the driest and cleanest rooms in the whole castle, he caused them to be sorted according to their subjects, and looked after by a librarian of known skill and discretion. In the same way he saw that the statutes and ordinances of the country, till now never studied or followed, though kept in safety, were properly brought to light. He nominated the ablest and most learned men whom he could find to search them, classify them, and provide suitable indices to such as did not seem important enough to be printed in full. He made it his business always to seek out the fittest men for the public service, training three such secretaries as Edward Waterhouse, Edward Tremaine, and Edmund Molineux. Nor did he give heed only to politics. He favoured all who did, or promised to do, any service to literature or science, it being a common remark of his that knowledge was to be honoured wherever it was found. He used large sums out of his scanty income to establish schools "for reforming the savageness of the people," and it was his darling project to found an Irish university which should be the rival of Oxford and Cambridge.

Besides his long employment in Ireland, he had often been occupied on other errands of State. Twice he had been sent into France, once into Spain, and once into Scotland. On two occasions he had gone into Kent, at one time to receive Duke Adolphus of Saxony, and at another to do honour to Prince Casimir. He had remained some time at Portsmouth, and had superintended the victualling of Newhaven.

Of Wales he had been Lord President for now three-and-twenty years; and he acknowledged the happy times he had spent there in the interval of other work. "Great it is," he said, "that, in some sort, I govern the third part of this realm under her most excellent Majesty; high it is, for by that I have precedence of great personages and far my betters; happy it is, for the goodness of the people whom I govern; and most happy it is, for the commodity that I have by the authority of that place to do good every day, if I have grace to one or other. There I confess I feel no small felicity; but, for any profit I gather by it, God and the people, seeing my manner of life, know it is not possible how I should gather any. For, alas, how can I, not having one groat of pension belonging to the office? I have not so much ground as will feed a mutton. I sell no justice; and if my mind were so base and corruptible as I would take money of the people I command, for my labour commanded by the queen and taken amongst them, yet could they give me none or very little, for the causes that come before me are causes of people mean, base, and many of them very beggars." "I confess," he said elsewhere, "I am the meanest and poorest man that ever occupied this place; yet I will and may compare. I have continued in better and longer housekeeping than any of my predecessors. I have builded more and repaired more of her Majesty's castles and houses, without issuing of money out of her Highness's coffers, than all the Presidents that have been this hundred years; and this will the Castle of Ludlow, the castles of Wigmore and of Montgomery

show." Twenty pounds a week was the allowance which he had for maintaining the dignity of his office, and it cost him fully thirty pounds. "Here some may object that upon the same I keep my wife and her followers. True it is she is now with me; and if both she and I had our food and house-room free—as we have not—in conscience we have deserved it. For my part, I am not idle, but every day I work in my function. And she, for her old service and the marks taken in the same, and yet remaining in her face, meriteth her meat." Lady Sidney's service, it will be remembered, was the nursing of Queen Elizabeth when her Majesty lay desperately ill with the smallpox; and the marks, now more than twenty years old, were the relics of the disease which she had caught in consequence of her unselfish conduct. Certainly she did merit her meat.*

"I have three sons," said Sir Henry Sidney in the letter, written to Sir Francis Walsingham, from which I have been quoting, "one of excellent good proof, the second of real good hope, and the third not to be despised of." Yet he would have to leave them, all three together, 70,000*l.* poorer than he, an only son, had been left by his father. "I am now fifty-four years of age, toothless and trembling, being 5000*l.* in debt, yea, and 30,000*l.* worse than I was at the death of my most dear king and master, King Edward VI. I have not from the Crown of England, of my own getting, so much ground as I can cover with my foot. All my fees amount not to one hundred marks a year. I never had, since the

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1. Hollinshed, vol. iii. pp. 1548—1552.

Queen's reign, any extraordinary forfeit, or otherwise, and yet, for all that was done and somewhat more than here is written, I cannot claim to have in fee-farm one hundred pounds a-year in my own possession. *Dura est conditio servorum !*"

Things being in this state, it is not strange that Sir Henry Sidney, when his proposed mission to Ireland was being talked about, should have insisted that, if sent at all, he must be sent with the highest possible credentials, or that, when that project, with its opportunity of new wealth and influence, had failed, he should have used all the honest and honourable influence within reach, for gaining something of the position in the world to which he felt himself justly entitled. To his elder son, the son "of excellent good proof," he naturally turned for assistance, and Philip, led not only by filial love, but also by personal interest, gladly did his best. In Wales and its outskirts he seems to have spent much time during the year 1582. In July he was at Hereford, in conference with Sir Henry. * Then, or a little later, they were preparing a full statement of the family difficulties, and seeing what was best to be done. The business was completed by November, when Philip returned to Court, as appears by a letter written by him to Lord Burghley on the 14th of the month. The dear friend and companion to whose recent death reference is made was William, the excellent son of Lord Wentworth, and married a year ago to Lord Burghley's youngest daughter, Elizabeth.

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 296.

"RIGHT HONOURABLE MY SINGULAR GOOD LORD,

"I came up hoping to have been myself a deliverer of the enclosed letters, and so to have laid my father's mind and matters in your Lordship's hands, as one on whose advice and direction he dependeth. But finding here the loss your Lordship hath of late had, it made me both at first delay the sending and now the bringing, lest, because we were friends and dear companions together, my sight might stir some grief unto your Lordship. Your Lordship will vouchsafe at your leisure to read them, and command me when you will have me attend your Lordship; and I beseech your Lordship to hold for assured that the family of my father doth and will hold your Lordship as a patron unto them. So, praying for your long and blessed life, I humbly take my leave.

"Your Lordship's humbly at commandment,

"PHILIP SIDNEY." *

That letter was not successful. Its lost enclosures appear to have been referred to the Queen, and to have been supported by all the influence of Sir Henry Sidney's friends, but without effect. Sir Francis Walsingham wrote to tell the issue, and Sir Henry made no further effort to obtain assistance from the Crown. "Since, by your letters of the 3rd of January," he wrote to his friend on the 1st of March, 1583, "to my great discomfort, I find there is no hope of relief from her Majesty from my decayed estate in her Highness's service,—for, since *you* give it over, I will never make more means, but say, *Spes et fortuna, valete!*—I am the more careful to keep myself able, by sale of that which is left, to ransom me out of the servitude I live in for my debts."†

* Murdin, *Burghley Papers*, p. 372.

† State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No. 1.

Philip also was disposed to retrench. Sick at heart, and sick in body, he left London, very soon after writing to Lord Burghley in November, and went on a visit to his sister Mary. From Wilton he sent to the Earl of Leicester, on the 16th of December, a somewhat mysterious letter. "I am bold to trouble your Lordship with these few words," he said, "humbly to crave your Lordship's favour so far unto me that it will please you to let me understand whether I may, with your Lordship's leave, that I may not offend in any want of service, remain absent from the Court this Christmas time. Some occasions, both of health and otherwise, do make me much desire it; but knowing how much my duty goes before any such causes, makes me bold to beseech humbly your Lordship to know your direction, which I will willingly follow, not only in these duties I am tied to, but in anything wherein I may be able to do your Lordship service." We may fairly guess that, among the other causes besides ill health which inclined Sidney to keep Christmas in privacy, the chief was a feeling of displeasure at the Queen's neglect of his own and his father's requests; but in what particular way he was bound to his uncle's service, or why he should write with such curious show of humility, we are not informed. There is no difficulty, however, in understanding the kind and characteristic postscript to this letter. "I was bold of late to move your Lordship in the case of the poor stranger musician. He hath already so far tasted your Lordship's goodness, as I am rather in his behalf, humbly to thank your Lordship; yet his case is such

as I am constrained to continue still a suitor to your Lordship for him." *

Sidney was able in person to plead the cause of the unknown musician. The leave to absent himself from Court at Christmas seems not to have been granted. At any rate, he was in attendance upon the Queen on the 1st of January, 1583, and then, whatever feelings were in his heart, there was no show of displeasure. He presented to his sovereign, as a New Year's gift, a beautiful golden flowerpot, shaped like a castle, and daintily garnished on one side with small diamonds.†

It may have been at this season that Queen Elizabeth, in token of her favour, gave him a lock of her hair. The hair, soft and bright, and of a light brown colour, approaching to red, still exists, wrapped up in paper, thus labelled by a contemporary hand :—"This lock of Queen Elizabeth's own hair was presented to Sir Philip Sidney by her Majesty's own fair hands, on which he made these verses and gave them to the Queen on his bended knee." The verses, written on another bit of paper, and in Sidney's own handwriting, were :—

"Her inward worth all outward show transcends,
Envy her merits with regret commends ;
Like sparkling gems her virtues draw the sight,
And in her conduct she is always bright.
When she imparts her thoughts, her words have force,
And sense and wisdom flow in sweet discourse."‡

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* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 393.

† Nichols, *Royal Progresses*, vol. ii. p. 309.

‡ *Notes and Queries*, Series I., vol. x. p. 241. The date given, 1573, is impossible, as Sidney was then a lad eighteen years old and

Another favour, greater than could be evinced in the gift of a lock of royal hair, was at this time shown to Sidney, although shown rather from necessity than from the Queen's choice. In 1579, as we have seen, while Prince Casimir was in England, her Majesty had nominated him a Knight of the Garter, giving evidence of her great esteem by herself fastening upon his leg the badge of the Order. Unable to wait for the installation, Casimir had appointed his very dear friend, Mr. Philip Sidney, to act as his proxy,* and the ceremony, delayed nearly four years, did not take place till the beginning of 1583. In anticipation thereof, it became necessary—according to a law of the Order permitting no one to be proxy for another unless himself a knight of some sort—for a title to be conferred on Sidney, and this was done on the 8th of January.† From that time our hero, no longer plain Philip Sidney, Esquire, was to be known as Sir Philip Sidney, Knight, of Penshurst.

Five days later, on the 13th of January, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's coronation, he presented himself at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, there to take possession of Prince Casimir's stall, and to go through the prescribed formalities.‡ His father was there also, claiming the stall due to himself, and in consequence a curious question of precedence rose among those who had direction of the affairs. Ought not

travelling on the Continent. I have therefore mentioned the circumstance under the year 1583, that being the most likely period.

* British Museum, *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, B. xi. fol. 419.

† Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. i. col. 519.

‡ Ashmole, *Order of the Garter*, pp. 436, 438. Collins, *Introduction to the Sidney Papers*, p. 103.

Sir Henry Sidney, being a commoner, to take a lower place than his son, seeing that Sir Philip acted as representative of a noble prince? * I have not found the answer.

Both father and son, then, were in attendance upon the Court. To the latter, if not to the former, there was no little show of such royal favour as could be expressed in verbal compliments, in gifts of hair, and in the conferment of inexpensive honours. But neither received any of the substantial rewards to which he had some reasonable claim, or the opportunities of honest work for which he longed. We have seen how fruitless were Philip's proceedings on behalf of his parent. Equally ineffective appear to have been some efforts which he made on his own account.

On the 23rd of July, 1582, he wrote from Hereford, asking Molineux to adopt suitable measures towards obtaining for him a place in her Majesty's Council,† that so he might be able to influence much more than was possible in his private capacity, the political movements of his country. There is no record of the immediate issue of that request, but it seems not to have been gratified.

Early in the new year he made application for another place, indicating the same desire to be about some useful business. Ever since the second year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, his uncle Ambrose Dudley,

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clviii. No. 11.

† *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 296.

Earl of Warwick, had held insignificant office as Master of the Ordnance, and now he volunteered to receive Philip as a partner in the work. The latter liked the thought, and, on the 27th of January, writing from the Court, sent a letter about it to Lord Burghley. "I have from my childhood been much bound to your Lordship," he said, "which, as the meanness of my fortune keeps me from ability to requite, so gives it me daily cause to make the bond greater by seeking and using your favour towards me." After that plain hint that he felt he was himself entitled to some more useful favours than he had yet received from the Crown, he proceeded: "The Queen, at my Lord of Warwick's request, hath been moved to join me in his office of Ordnance, and, as I learn her Majesty yields gracious hearing unto it, my suit is your Lordship will favour and further it, which, I truly affirm unto your Lordship, I much more desire for the being busied about some serviceable experience than for any other commodity, which I think is but small, that can arise of it." *

To that request no answer appears to have been made. Therefore another letter was despatched, from Ramsbury in Wiltshire, on the 22nd of July. "Without carrying with me any further reason of this boldness than your well known goodness unto me," he here wrote, "I humbly crave of your Lordship your good word to her Majesty for the confirming that grant she once made unto me, of joining me in patent with my

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 393.

Lord of Warwick, whose desire is that it should be so. The larger discoursing hereof I will omit as superfluous to your wisdom; neither will I use more plenty of words till God make me able to point them in some serviceable effect towards your Lordship." * But to this second request also I can find no reply; probably none was sent. There is extant no further reference to the subject until about two years later. In the meanwhile Sidney found other and more stirring occupation for his thoughts.

During the first half of the year 1583, or at some earlier period, he received from the Queen one gift which, though worthless to the giver, was of very real importance. By her Majesty's letters patent he was "licensed and authorized to discover, search, find out, view, and inhabit certain parts of America not yet discovered, and out of those countries, by him, his heirs, factors, or assignees, to have and enjoy, to him, his heirs, and assignees for ever, such and so much quantity of ground as should amount to the number of thirty hundred thousand acres of ground and wood, with all commodities, jurisdictions, and royalties, both by sea and land, with full power and authority that it should and might be lawful for the said Sir Philip Sidney, his heirs and assignees, at all times thereafter to have, take, and lead in the said voyage, to travel thitherwards or to inhabit there with him or them, and every or any of them, such and so many her Majesty's subjects as should willingly accompany him and them and every or any of

* *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 357.

them, with sufficient shipping and furniture for their transportations." *

That Sidney should have sought and obtained, from a sovereign famous for her obstinate restraining of all her courtiers within the precincts of the Court, permission to search the new and barbarous continent of America, and there found a colony, betokens great zeal and a very strong determination on his part. That he was one of the earliest patrons and most energetic champions of the movement by which origin was given to the great empire of the United States, is a circumstance redounding not a little to his credit. Other and more pressing claims arose to hinder, and soon to make impossible, his own departure as leader of the first North American colony of Englishmen; but he did very memorable and thankworthy service in encouraging others to undertake and prosecute the work.

For many years past he had been largely interested in the various schemes for Atlantic voyaging and exploration. In 1577 and 1578 we saw him so far tempted to join in Captain Frobisher's projected journeys, by a North West Passage, to the Indies, or to the intermediate islands of gold, as to arouse Hubert Languet's fears, and to draw from him earnest arguments and entreaties. In the autumn of 1580 his attention had been arrested by the exploits, everywhere discussed and everywhere praised, of Captain Francis Drake, lately returned from four years of sailing in wild parts.

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clxi. No. 44.

"About the world he hath been, and rich he is returned," he wrote to his brother Robert.* But neither Frobisher's scheme of barren journeying in the north, nor Drake's plan of destroying Spanish settlements and appropriating Spanish treasures in the south, was quite to the liking of Sidney. With real pleasure he entered into the views about peaceful voyaging to accessible parts, of which Sir Humphrey Gilbert was the first eloquent expounder both in theory and in practice.

For many years Gilbert must have been well known to Sidney. Born about the year 1539, he had been employed in Ireland for some time previous to 1576, and by his brave service had won the hearty esteem of Sidney's father, at that time Lord Deputy. At Sir Henry's recommendation he was appointed President of Munster, and by him he was knighted in 1570, being then about thirty years of age. Soon after that date he returned to England, and, gathering round him some friends of kindred mind, he appears to have at once begun laying plans for American research. On the 22nd of March, 1574, we find that a committee was appointed by Queen Elizabeth to consider the petition of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Sir George Peckham, Mr. Christopher Carlyle, and others, respecting the quest of sundry rich and unknown lands in the western world.† This committee agreed to the searching of the northern parts of America, seeing that the region appeared to be very fruitful, to be peopled by savages of

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i. p. 285.

† State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xcv. No. 63.

a mild and tractable disposition, and to be of all unfrequented places the only fittest and most commodious one for English adventurers to meddle with.* In consequence of this permission, Gilbert, in company with his half-brother, Walter Raleigh, made a voyage to Newfoundland, and on coming back he received as reward, a special grant to undertake north-western discoveries, and to occupy any lands which he found unpossessed by Christian princes or their subjects.† But the grant had no immediate issue; he was too poor to prosecute his darling object as he wished. There are extant some very touching letters, from himself and from his wife, detailing the straits to which they were reduced. On one occasion, writing to Walsingham about some money due to him from the Crown, he said it was a miserable thing for him, that after seven-and-twenty years service, he should now be subject to daily arrests, executions, and outlawries, and have even to sell his wife's clothing from off her back, for the sake of buying food to live upon.‡ The poor man was able, however, to talk much and eloquently upon the subject, and to his earnest efforts we must mainly ascribe the work subsequently done.

In the ensuing years many little voyages of exploration were made, the direction taken being chiefly to the parts of America southward of Newfoundland. In 1579, Simon Ferdinando, a follower of Sir Francis Walsingham's, spent

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Colonial Correspondence*, vol. i. No. 1.

† Ibid., *Domestic Correspondence*, vol. cxxvi. No. 49.

‡ Ibid., *Domestic Correspondence*, vol. cxlix. No. 66; July 11, 1581.

three months on the coast, and he and others brought back very glowing reports of the place and people, telling how there were pieces of clean gold as large as a man's fist to be picked up in the heads of some of the rivers, how the streets were broader and richer than those of London, how many of the cottages were stored with pearls, how the banqueting-houses were built of crystal, with pillars often of massive silver, sometimes of solid gold, and how much of the scanty clothing which the people wore was of this same precious yellow; telling, moreover, how the natives worshipped a devil who sometimes spoke to them in the semblance of a calf, how there were great beasts, as large as two ordinary oxen, which it was great sport to kill, and how there were fiery dragons which made the air very red as they flew about.*

Such stories could not fail to rouse the enthusiasm of all, and the enterprizing spirit of very many. Most zealous of all appears to have been Sir Philip Sidney. To him, as the leader of the whole work, his old college friend, Richard Hakluyt, dedicated his first small collection of *Voyages*, published in 1582. By him was obtained from Queen Elizabeth, as we have seen, a charter for the possession of three million acres of such land as he might find and inhabit. Save the grant to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, dated 1574, that is the earliest known charter of colonization issued by the Queen.

But Sidney, if not quite so impoverished as Gilbert,

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Colonial Correspondence*, vol. i. No. 2. The beasts, of course, were buffaloes, and the fiery dragons may have been fancied in the aurora borealis.

was at present too poor to undertake the suitable equipment of a fleet of discovery and the proper maintenance of a colony, when formed, until regular means of subsistence had been established. Moreover, besides the lack of money, there were many weighty reasons for his remaining at home. If his courtly bonds had been loosened, by personal and family ties he was too closely bound to England for him to quit it at this time. Therefore he postponed the intended expedition. A year or two later he renewed his projects, and planned more zealously than ever for his own voyaging; but for the present he was willing to depute the work to some one else. This he did in July, 1583. In that month I find that "for the more speedy execution of her Majesty's grant, and the enlargement of her Majesty's dominions and governments; for the better encouragement of Sir George Peckham and his associates in so worthy and commendable an enterprize; as also for divers other causes specially moving him;" he gave to his friend permission to discover and take possession, in his name, with full holding of "all royalties, titles, pre-eminences, privileges, liberties, and dignities, thereunto belonging." It was provided that the same tenure should belong to any guild, or body politic or corporate, formed by Sir George in furtherance of the discovery; and furthermore, Sir Philip declared himself "contented and agreed that all and every such sum or sums of money and other commodities whatsoever, which should be procured, gotten, or received, of any of the persons, guild, or body aforesaid, adventuring for and towards the said discovery, should be paid to the same Sir George, or

his heirs, for and towards his and their charges in furnishing and setting forth a supply of shipping, victual, munition and other necessaries into the same countries, without any account to be yielded there-for by the same Sir George or his heirs, unto the said Sir Philip Sidney or his heirs."*

The articles of that transfer were drawn up in July, 1583. Of the "divers causes and considerations especially moving" Sir Philip Sidney to effect it, undoubtedly the strongest was his recent marriage with Frances Walsingham, eldest daughter of the famous Secretary of State, Sidney's dear friend of ten years' standing.

Of this lady's life and character we know but little. It is a circumstance prejudicial to her that very soon after her husband's death, and still nearer to the decease of her father, she should have been willing stealthily to become the wife of Robert Devereux, the flashing Earl of Essex. It is still less creditable that she allowed very little time to elapse, after her second husband's execution, before she changed her religion with a view of marrying Richard de Burgh, Earl of Clanricarde. But in the temper of her age, and in the special circumstances of her position, there may have

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Series Elizabeth*, vol. clxi. No. 44. This Sir George Peckham, as stated in the text, was one of the early associates of Gilbert, in the project for American colonization. Three years before this, he, conjointly with some others, had written to Walsingham to say that Sir Humphrey Gilbert had transferred to them his patent for the discovery and conquest of heathen lands, and to ask leave for certain persons to quit England with them for that purpose (Ibid. vol. cxlvi. No. 40). But I cannot see that anything came of either undertaking.

been fair excuse for her conduct. Certain it is that Sidney highly esteemed her. Often at her father's house, he must have had good opportunities of watching her growth, in body and mind, from very early years. Her identity with the "exceeding like to be good friend," of whom, in December, 1581, he thought in connection with Sir Francis and Lady Walsingham, has already been suggested. I imagine that her attractions, rapidly unfolding themselves as she passed from childhood into maidenhood, formed Sidney's chief inducement to break through his unworthy passion for Lady Rich.

That, if we are to draw any meaning out of the many poems which he wrote about it, was no easy work. Blinded by the fascination of a beautiful woman whom he had much excuse for loving, he fluttered to and fro for a time helplessly.

"Like as the dove, which seeled up doth fly,
Is neither freed, nor yet to service bound,
But hopes to gain some help by mounting high,
Till want of force do force her fall to ground;
Right so my mind, caught by his guiding eye,
And thence cast off where his sweet hurt be found,
Hath neither leave to live, nor doom to die,
Nor held in ill, nor suffered to be sound;
But with his wings of fancies up he goes
To high conceits, whose fruits are oft but small,
Till wounded, blind and wearied spirit lose
Both force to fly and knowledge where to fall.
O happy dove, if she no bondage tried!
More happy I, might I in bondage bide!"*

* *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 225.

Elsewhere the troubled lover expressed the same thought more forcibly :—

"Finding those beams, which I must ever love,
To mar my mind and with my hurt to please,
I deemed it best some absence for to prove,
If further place might further me to ease.
My eyes thence drawn, where livèd all their light,
Blinded forthwith in dark despair did lie,
Like to the mole, with want of guiding sight,
Deep plunged in earth, deprivèd of the sky.
In absence blind, and wearied with that woe,
To greater woes, by presence I return ;
Even as the fly which to the flame doth go,
Pleased with the light that his small corpse doth burn.
Fair choice I have, either to live or die,
A blinded mole, or else a burned fly." *

In such heart-sickness there was life. Long oppressed and well-nigh deadened by the malady which had seized him, the very return of vigorous health brought with it new and galling pain. But soon the pain and the malady were to depart together, and then the strong man was to rise from his couch and walk the world with new and very noble feelings, wiser for all the hard lessons of experience which he had learnt, skilful to guard against peril in the future, and resolute in the determination henceforth to live worthily. Sidney was all but cured when he could write thus :—

"Thou blind man's mark, thou fool's self-chosen snare,
Fond fancy's scum, and dregs of scattered thought,
Band of all evils, cradle of causeless care,
Thou web of will whose end is never wrought,

* *Miscellaneous Works.* p. 231.

Desire ! desire ! I have too dearly bought,
With price of mangled mind, thy worthless ware.
Too long, too long asleep thou hast me brought,
Who shouldst my mind to higher things prepare.

But yet in vain thou hast my ruin sought,
In vain thou mad'st me to vain things aspire,
In vain thou kindlest all thy smoky fire ;
For virtue hath this better lesson taught,
Within myself to seek my only hire,
Desiring nought but how to kill desire." *

And he was something more than cured—he had earned a nobility that he could never have won without triumphing in some great struggle between good and evil, when he could utter this song :—

"Leave me, O love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou my mind, aspire to higher things ;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust,
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.

Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.

O, take fast hold ! let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to chide,
Who seeketh heaven and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell world, thy uttermost I see ;
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me." †

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* *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 249.

† Ibid, p. 250. Let Stella's story be told to the end. Living for twenty-five years after this spring of 1583, she continued to hold high place in the favour of the Queen, and her wit and beauty made her almost as great an ornament of the Court, as was her brother, the Earl of Essex, whom, in both good and bad features of mind she much resembled. After Sir Philip Sidney's death, she

With such pure thoughts to guide him then, Sir Philip Sidney took in marriage the daughter of the best and wisest friend remaining to him now that Hubert Languet was dead. Refusing to understand the tokens "though obvious to every eye," we are told, with which

appears to have been on very friendly terms with his kindred. In 1595, Sir Robert Sidney became a father, and Lady Rich consented to be godmother to the child, notwithstanding its being afflicted with the then dreaded measles. She, however, was herself troubled with a gathering on her forehead, and in consequence the christening had to be several times postponed. A brisk and very amusing correspondence arose out of these matters, but at last all difficulties were overcome, and the ceremony was performed on New Year's eve (*Sidney Papers*, vol. i. pp. 372, 385, 386).

About this time, or perhaps before, began her luckless intimacy with Sir Christopher Blount, now become her brother's zealous friend and prudent adviser. In his company she passed some years, bearing to him three children. Of this connection, however, the Elizabethan Court thought no ill, and in the respect paid to her by all there was no abatement. In 1600, Blount, who had gained the title of Lord Mountjoy, was sent to Ireland with a view of remedying some of the disasters consequent upon the Earl of Essex's ill-fated mission. While he was winning credit for himself and for England, and while Essex was earning his ignominious death, Lady Rich returned to her husband, lived amicably with him, and nursed him very tenderly during a dangerous illness. When Mountjoy returned to England, however, she went back to his society, and by mutual agreement a formal divorce from her husband was effected. Henceforth she lived publicly with her lover, and, under the new rule of King James the First, both received as much honour as was possible. By one of the acts of grace consequent upon James's accession to the English throne, Mountjoy was created Earl of Devonshire. In August of the same year Lady Rich, who according to custom had hitherto only taken rank through her husband as a junior baroness, was elevated to the title and dignity of the most ancient Earls of Essex, the Bouchiers, and thus had precedence of all the Earl's daughters in the kingdom, with the exception of four (State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, James I.*, vol. iii. No. 25). Upon the virtuous Queen she was a favourite

many noble ladies "ventured, as far as modesty would permit, to signify their affections unto him," he must have had sound reason for making preference of Fanny Walsingham. The quaint writer from whom I have just quoted, may be trusted when he adds that, "though Sir Philip received no considerable accruement of means by his match, yet accounting virtue a portion to itself, he so affectionately loved her that herein he was exemplary to all gentlemen not to carry their love in their purses, or so to consult profit as to prefer it before merit in marriage."*

Of the date of the marriage we have no precise knowledge. It probably took place very soon after the 1st of March. On that day it was the subject of a letter from Sir Henry Sidney to Sir Francis Walsingham.

attendant (Ibid., vol. iii. No. 89), and not a word of scandal was spoken of her.

But in 1605 the Earl and his mistress resolved upon taking what now a-days would be thought the best possible step towards blotting out the stain of their union. On the 26th of December they were married at Wanstead; little anticipating the result of the wedding. Straightway the whole Court was in a ferment. In pious horror King James protested against the wickedness of marrying one who had been put away by her husband: it was a grievous violation of God's law, and could not be looked upon with sufficient abhorrence. The courtiers echoed the same language, and Devonshire found that by this one rash act he had cancelled all the hardly earned credit of years. He defended himself in a long letter to the King, and referred the case to the Ecclesiastical Judges. But he died almost immediately, on the 3rd of April following. The quartering of the arms of Essex with those of his own house upon his tomb was forbidden, and his wife's claims to widowhood were never recognized. She died next year, 1607, at the age of forty-four. Certainly Stella's history is a strange one, and needs no commentary to point its moral!

* *The Life and Death of Sir Philip Sidney.*

"I have understood of late," he said, "that coldness is thought in me, in proceeding in the matter of the marriage of our children. In truth, sir, it is not so, nor so shall it ever be found. I most willingly agree, and protest I joy in the alliance with all my heart." The only reason for his being backward in forwarding the proposed union was detailed in a passage already quoted. He was too poor to furnish his son with an income suitable to his needs as a husband. Partly with this in view, he said, he had for many months past been hoping that some such emolument as he knew that he deserved, would be accorded to him ; but the Secretary's letter of the 3rd of January, had finally robbed him of all hope.

It was not only for his son that he had hoped ; his own necessities were very great, as he suggested in some curious sentences, very noteworthy for their indication of the difference of thought prevailing on many points between the Elizabethan age and our own. "As I know, sir," he observed, "that it is for the virtue which is, or which you suppose is, in my son, that you made choice of him for your daughter, refusing haply far greater and far richer matches than he, so was my confidence great, that by your good means, I might have obtained some small reasonable suit of her Majesty, and therefore I nothing regarded any present gain, for if I had, *I might have received a great sum of money for my goodwill of my son's marriage*, greatly to the relief of my present biting necessity. For truly, sir, I respect nothing by provision or prevention of that which may come hereafter, as this : I am not so unlucky but that

I may be so employed as I may have occasion to sell land to redeem myself out of prison; *nor yet am I so old, nor my wife so healthy, but that she may die, and I marry again and get children.* If such a thing should happen, God's law and man's law will that both one and other be provided for. Many other accidents of regard might be alleged, but none do I respect, only to acquit me of the thraldom I now live in for my debts." It is odd that so loving and really unselfish a man as Sir Henry Sidney should have thought and written in such terms as these. But whatever grounds he had for wishing to better his condition, it was very hard, very pitiful that so able a servant of the Queen, one of whose noble deeds the marks are yet standing in many parts of Ireland and of Wales, should have been left to live on in poverty and with the possibility of a prison, while to worthless courtiers vast estates and splendid sinecures were being given in payment for nothing but their handsome persons and their great skill in flattery. But so it was. In Sir Philip Sidney's short career there was sure foreboding of "present biting necessity," as great as his father's had he lived as long.

Having begun his letter with a plain statement of his troubles, Sir Henry proceeded at length to show what sort of work he had done for the Crown, and how the Crown had recompensed him. Many passages of the autobiographical sketch have been already quoted in illustration of his own and his son's career. "And now, dear sir, and brother," wrote the Lord President in conclusion, "an end to this tedious, tragical treatise; tedious for you to read; tragical I may well term it,

for that it began with the joyful love and great liking, with likelihood of matrimonial match, between our most dear and sweet children (whom God bless!) and endeth with declaration of my unfortunate and bad estate. Our Lord bless you with long life and healthful happiness! I pray you, sir, commend me most heartily to my good lady, cousin and visitor, your wife; and bless and buss our sweet daughter. And, if you will vouchsafe, bestow a blessing upon the young knight, Sir Philip." *

That letter being written in March, we must suppose that the "joyful love and great liking" between Sir Philip Sidney, aged eight-and-twenty, and Mistress Frances Walsingham, who could hardly have been more than fifteen years old, issued in marriage on some day in the ensuing spring or early summer. Of the exact date there is no record, nor can I find any detail of Sidney's movements or occupations between the 22nd of July, 1583, when he was at Ramsbury, in Wiltshire, writing to Lord Burghley, as we have seen, and the 8th of July, 1584, when he was in attendance upon Queen Elizabeth. For a great part of this year he was probably leading a retired life, in the full enjoyment of his altered condition as a married man. At intervals he was doubtless moving, less gaily and more worthily, within the circle of the Court. We may infer from his subsequent proceedings, that in this waiting-time he was watching, very eagerly and very thoughtfully, the

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clix. No 1.

progress of affairs in the world of politics. We have evidence that he was also walking nobly, like a king who chose to go uncrowned, in the world of letters. This year, though so blank to us, must have been anything but an idle and ill-spent one.

CHAPTER XIII.

LATER WRITINGS.

1583—1585.

If *The Arcadia* deserves to be read for its indication of the state of Sidney's mind while yet in courtly bondage, *The Defence of Poesie*, only one sixteenth as long, affords delightful study to all who would understand the strength and beauty of his unfettered intellect. Upon it, chiefly, Sidney's fame as an author will always rest. It must ever be regarded as one of the choicest ornaments of Elizabethan literature.

It was a thoroughly original work. Very little had been written in foreign languages, and there was nothing in English, which could rob him of renown as the foremost literary critic of real worth. Of verbal criticism there had been much; and hardly anything of this kind could be better than a work already mentioned, Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, published in 1554. Wilson, indeed, professing to speak only of the right use of words, had occasionally turned aside to offer wise judgment upon the sense wrapped up in the words of famous authors; but such remarks were merely incidental. Sidney may have found more precedent in the *Poetics* of Julius Cæsar Scaliger, wherein after much description of the various sorts of poems, of the different

metres, and of all possible figures of speech and turns of language, he presented a lengthy comparison of Homer with Virgil, and a criticism of the various modern writers of Latin verse. But the *Poetics*, though it may possibly have suggested the writing of *The Defence of Poesie*, can have done no more.

The real suggestion came from the Puritan element in the thought of that age. In the minds of many honest thinkers there had lately grown up, a strong distaste for poetry, "which," said Sidney, "from almost the highest estimation of learning, is fallen to be the laughing-stock of children." On this account, he averred, "I—who, I know not by what mischance, in these my not old years and idlest times, having slipped into the title of a poet—am provoked to say something unto you in the defence of that my unelected vocation." He came forward as the champion, not simply of poetry, according to the modern limits of the word, but of all elegant and imaginative writing, including such works as his own *Arcadia*; for, he said, "it is not rhyming and versing that maketh poetry; one may be a poet without versing, and a versifier without poetry." It is worth our while to look carefully at the argument of the book.

Sidney began by charging with ungratefulness those who, professing learning, sought to defame that which had ever been the first destroyer of ignorance and the first nurse of young peoples, whom it fitted to be afterwards fed on tougher knowledge. What but poets were Homer and Hesiod and others? and were they not justly to be called the founders of learning? "For not only

in time they had this priority, (although in itself antiquity be venerable,) but went before them, as causes to draw, with their charming sweetness, the wild untamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So, as Amphion was said to move stones with his poetry to build Thebes, and Orpheus to be listened to by beasts,—indeed, stony and beastly people,—so among the Romans were Livius, Andronicus, and Ennius ; so in the Italian language—the first that made it to aspire to be a treasure-house of science were the poets Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch ; so in our English were Gower and Chaucer, after whom, encouraged and delighted with their excellent foregoing, others have followed to beautify our mother-tongue, as well in the same kind as other arts." For a long time the philosophers and historiographers of Greece dared to teach their lessons to the world only under the mask of poetry. Thales and Empedocles, Pythagoras and Solon, and a crowd of others, taught in verse. Plato, in his imagined dialogues and fanciful descriptions, clothed the strong body of philosophy with a beautiful garment of poetry. And Herodotus usurped from this same source those descriptions of passions and particularities of battles which no man could have seen, and all those long orations of great kings or captains which certainly were never pronounced. Why, even the barbarous Indians have their poets, who sing to them the doings of their ancestors and the praises of their gods. In Ireland, where learning goes very bare, poets are devoutly reverenced ; and in Wales the bards have lasted through all the conquests of Romans, Saxons,

Danes, and Normans, whereby it was sought to expel even the memory of learning.

Among the Romans a poet was called *vates*, a diviner; and better still, the Greeks named him ποιητὴς, a maker; and surely he is both. There is no other art so deep-drawn and so inspired. The astronomer traces nature's work by looking on the stars. The geometrician builds only with known quantities. The musician but measures invented sounds with the natural voice. The moral philosopher founds his teaching upon known virtues, and vices, and passions. The lawyer says what men have determined; the historian what they have done. The grammarian, rhetorician, and logician, simply shape rules out of the experiences of nature: and so with other workers. "Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or quite anew; forms such as never were in nature, as the heroes, demi-gods, Cyclops, Chimeras, fairies, and such like; so as he goeth hand in hand with nature; not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done, neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too-much-loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen: the poets only deliver a golden." "But these arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer granted. Thus much I hope will be given me, that the Greeks with some

probability of reason gave them the name above all names of learning."

After an introduction of this sort, Sidney proceeded to an orderly view of his subject. Poetry, he said is of three kinds. The first and noblest is that which sets forth the inconceivable excellences of God ; but of it not much need be remarked, for against it no one in his right mind will protest. The second deals with philosophical, or moral, or natural, or historical matter, and is worthy of commendation. But the best part of such poetry belongs truly to the third kind of poetry, wherein invention has free scope ; where those who exercise it, using wisely their knowledge of what goes on around them, but not drawing from it their inspiration, teach men to know thoroughly what goodness is, and move them gladly to seek after it.

Of this third kind of poetry, there are many divisions. "The most notable be the heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satyric, iambic, elegiac, pastoral, and certain others ; some of these being termed according to the matter they deal with, some by the sort of verse they like best to write in ; for, indeed, the greatest part of poets have apparelled their poetical inventions in that numerous kind of writing which is called verse." Yet verse, we are told, is "but an ornament, and no cause to poetry ; since there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets. . . . . It is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet, no more than a long gown maketh an advocate, who, though he pleaded in armour, should

be an advocate and no soldier. But it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by; although, indeed, the senate of poets have chosen verse as their fittest raiment, meaning, as in matter they passed all, so in manner to go beyond them; not speaking table-talk fashion, or like men in a dream, words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but piecing each syllable of each word by just proportion, according to the dignity of the subject."

And what rank shall poetry have among the products of human genius? Let it be granted, said Sir Philip Sidney, that, of this purifying of wit, enriching of memory, strengthening of judgment, and enlarging of conceit, which we commonly call learning, the one end is "to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay-lodgings, can be capable of." Some have sought by astrology to seek out and appropriate the secrets of heavenly wisdom; some, thinking that they knew the final causes of things, have professed to be natural and supernatural philosophers; some have essayed to demonstrate everything by mathematics, yet all have had one object, "to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying of his own divine essence." But when, by the balance of experience, it was found that the astronomer, looking at the stars, might fall into a ditch, that the inquiring philosopher might be blind in himself, and the mathematician might draw forth a straight line with a crooked heart, then lo! did proof,

the over-ruler of opinions, make manifest that all these are but serving sciences, which, as they have a private end in themselves, so yet are they all directed to the highest end of the mistress knowledge, by the Greeks called ἀρχιτεκτονική, which stands, as I think, in the knowledge of a man's self, in the ethic and prolific consideration, with the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only. Therefore, the ending end of all earthly learning being virtuous action, those skills that most serve to bring forth that have a most just title to be princes over all the rest; wherein, if we can show it rightly, the poet is worthy to have it before any competitors."

But there are many competitors; two, especially, being worthy of note—the moral philosopher and the historian. Philosophy and history, it will be remembered, were the favourite pursuits of Sidney ten years earlier in his life. The progress of his mind is admirably illustrated by the way in which he here, while largely honouring them, gave to poetry a larger honour. Of the philosophers he said, in an unkind bit of most polished sarcasm, "Methinks I see them coming toward me with a sullen gravity, as though they could not abide vice by daylight; rudely clothed, for to witness outwardly their contempt of outward things; with books in their hands against glory, whereto they set their names; sophistically speaking against subtilty, and angry with any man in whom they see the foul fault of anger." Close upon their heels is the historian, "laden with old mouse-eaten records, authorizing himself, for the most part, upon other histories, whose

greatest authorities are built upon the notable foundation of hearsay; having much ado to accord differing writers, and to pick truth out of partiality; better acquainted with a thousand years ago than with the present age, and yet better knowing how this world goes than how his own wit runs; curious for antiquities and inquisitive of novelties, a wonder to young folks and a tyrant in table-talk." In words very apt and pithy, Sidney then showed how each of these teachers vaunted his own vocation; the gist of their disputation being that, each seeking to be honest teachers of righteousness, the one taught only by precept, the other only by example.

"But both, not having both, do both halt. For the philosopher, setting down with thorny arguments the bare rule, is so hard of utterance, and so misty to be conceived, that one that hath no other guide but him shall waste in him till he be old, before he shall find sufficient cause to be honest; for his knowledge standeth so upon the abstract and general, that happy is that man who can understand him, and more happy that can apply what he doth understand. On the other side, the historian, wanting the precept, is so tied, not to what should be but to what is, to the particular truth of things and not to the general reason of things, that his example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a less fruitful doctrine. Now doth the peerless poet perform both."

At great length, and with admirable clearness, Sidney proceeded to prove this assertion. Of those truths which the philosopher vaguely presents, the poet gives

a perfect picture, "for he yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul, so much as that other doth." He talks to us about patriotism, and we only dimly follow him; yet "let us but hear old Anchises speaking in the middle of Troy's flames, or see Ulysses, in the fulness of all Calypso's delights, bewail his absence from barren and beggarly Ithaca," and we shall understand what love of country means. "Anger, the stoics say, was a short madness: let but Sophocles bring you Ajax on a stage, killing or whipping sheep and oxen, thinking them the army of Greeks, with their chieftains Agamemnon and Menelaus; and tell me, if you have not a more familiar insight into anger than finding in the schoolman his genus and difference. See whether wisdom and temperance in Ulysses and Diomedes, valour in Achilles, friendship in Nisus and Euryalus, even to an ignorant man, carry not an apparent shining; and, contrarily, the remorse of conscience in Œdipus, the soon-repenting pride in Agamemnon, the self-devouring cruelty in his father Atreus, the violence of ambition in the two Theban brothers, the sour sweetness of revenge in Medea, and, to fall lower, the Terentian Gnatho and our Chaucer's Pandar, so expressed that we now use their names to signify their trades; and finally, all virtues, vices, and passions, so in their own natural states laid to the view that we seem not to hear of them, but clearly to see through them." Surely the poet is the true philosopher.

And is not a chief part of the praise commonly given to history, the rightful property of poetry? History provides examples whereby virtue may be followed and vice shunned. But poetry does this far better. The records of the past are often such as to deter men from well-doing, and to encourage them to unbridled wickedness. "For see we not Miltiades rot in his fetters? the just Phocion and the accomplished Socrates put to death like traitors? the cruel Severus live prosperously? the excellent Severus miserably murdered? Sylla and Marius dying in their beds? Pompey and Cicero slain then when they would have thought exile a happiness? See we not virtuous Cato driven to kill himself, and rebel Cæsar so advanced that his name yet, after sixteen hundred years, lasteth in the highest honour?" But the poet ever so clothes goodness in his best colours, that none can help being enamoured of her; and evil, when brought upon the stage, is so manacled that no one is tempted to follow it.

It appears, then, that of all sciences,—passing by theology, which is not to be measured with human learning, and law, which is not a very noble pursuit, seeing that it "doth not endeavour to make men good, but that their evil hurt not others, having no care, so he be a good citizen, how bad a man be,"—the poet's is the grandest, "for he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it; nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth

not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margin with interpretations and load the memory with doubtfulness, but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with or prepared for the will-enchanting skill of music, and with a tale,—forsooth, he cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney-corner, and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue. Even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste, which, if one should tell them the nature of the aloes or rhubarb they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth ; so it is in men, most of whom are childish in the best things till they be cradled in their graves. Glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas ; and hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice, which if they had been barely,—that is to say, philosophically,—set out, they would swear they be brought to school again." "And so," said Sidney, after much further argument, and many other illustrations aptly chosen and gracefully presented, "a conclusion not unfitly ensues,—that as virtue is the most excellent resting-place for all worldly learning to make his end of, so poetry, being the most familiar to teach it and most princely to move towards it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman."

From general praise of poesy, Sidney passed to a summing up of its parts. There is the pastoral poem,

teaching lofty lessons under lowly examples, showing the whole considerations of wrong-doing and of patience under pretty tales of sheep and shepherds. There is the lamenting elegiac, bewailing the weakness of mankind and the wretchedness of the world. There is the bitter but wholesome iambic, "making shame the trumpet of villany, with bold and open crying out against naughtiness." There is the satiric, which sets a man laughing at his folly till he is forced to avoid it. There is comedy, painting the common errors of our life so scornfully that no beholder can go away content to follow them any longer. There is the high and excellent tragedy, "that openeth the greatest wounds and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue, that maketh kings fear to be tyrants and tyrants to manifest their tyrannical humours, that, with stirring the effects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilded roofs are builded." There is the lyric, giving praise, the reward of virtue, to virtuous acts. "Certainly, I must confess mine own barbarousness; I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet: and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?"* Lastly, there is the heroical,

* *The Ancient Ballad of Chevy-Chase*, published by Percy (*Reliques*, Series i. book 1), is doubtless the one referred to by Sidney. The later version (*Reliques*, Series i. book 3) was composed soon after his day, perhaps at the suggestion made in the text.

whose very name should daunt all backbiters, "who doth not only teach and move to truth, but teacheth and moveth to the most high and excellent truth, who maketh magnanimity and justice shine through all misty fearfulness and foggy desires."

"Since, then, poetry is of all human learnings the most ancient and of most fatherly antiquity, as from whence other learnings have taken their beginnings; since it is so universal that no learned nation doth despise it, nor barbarous nation is without it; since both Romans and Greeks gave such divine names unto it, the one of prophesying and the other of making, and that indeed that name of making is fit for him, considering that, where all other arts retain themselves within their subject, and receive as it were their being from it, the poet only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceit; since neither his description nor end containeth any evil; since his effects be so good as to teach goodness, and delight the learners of it; since therein—namely, in moral doctrine, the chief of all knowledges—he doth not only far pass the historian but, for instructing, is well-nigh comparable to the philosopher, and, for moving, leaveth him behind him; since the Holy Scripture, wherein there is no uncleanness, hath whole parts in it poetical, and that even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it; since all his kinds are, not only in their united forms, but in their severed dissections, fully commendable; I think, and think I think rightly, the laurel-crown appointed for triumphant captains,

doth worthily, of all other learnings, honour the poet's triumph."

But all do not think so, said Sidney. Therefore in the second half of his treatise, he enumerated the objections which foolish cavillers raised to poetry, and answered them in detail. Besides the very idle complaints against rhyme, as rhyme and in opposition to prose, there are four chief charges against poetry.

The first objection, that, "there being many other more fruitful knowledges, a man might better spend his time in them than in this," has already been fully answered in showing the great power of poesy in teaching and moving men to virtue. Besides, even granting the first assumption, it does not follow that good is not good because better is better.

The second accusation, that poetry is the mother of lies, Sidney asserted to be so far untrue, that of all writers under the sun the poet is the least liar. All others, and most of all the historian, affirming many things, can hardly escape from many false statements. But the poet never affirms : he presents, not stories of what has been, but pictures of what ought to be, or ought not be ; and even though he gives real names to his heroes, no one past childhood can be deceived by what he writes.

A third complaint is, that poetry is the nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires, with a syren sweetness drawing the mind to sinful fancies. "They say the comedies rather teach than reprehend amorous conceits ; they say the lyric is larded with passionate sonnets, the elegiac weeps the want of his

mistress, and that even to the heroical Cupid hath ambitiously climbed." "What a thankless charge this is!" exclaimed Sidney. "But grant love of beauty to be a beastly fault, although it be very hard, since only man, and no beast, hath that gift to discern beauty; grant that lovely name of love to deserve all hateful reproaches, although even some of my masters, the philosophers, spent a good deal of their lamp oil in setting forth the excellency of it; grant, I say, what they will have granted, that not only love, but lust, but vanity, but, if they list, sensuality, possess many leaves of the poets' books; yet think I, when this is granted, they will find their sentence may, with good manners, put the last words foremost, and not say that poetry abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth poetry." It is quite true that the poet may misuse his art; but so may the physician, the lawyer, the theologian, and every other worker; for it is plain that "whatsoever, being abused, doth most harm, being rightly used, doth most good." "Truly a needle cannot do much hurt, and as truly,—with leave of ladies be it spoken,—it cannot do much good;" but it is the glory of the sword that, with the same power which it gives to a bad man for killing his father, it enables a good man to deliver his country. Therefore this argument of abuse has no weight.

Nor is there any real force in the fourth charge against poetry; that, because Plato banished its professors from his ideal commonwealth, it is to be reprobated by all loving followers of Plato. For, remember, said Sidney, it was not poetry that Plato banished,

but the poets of his time. He saw them filling the world with wrong opinions of God, and making light tales about that unspotted Essence; and consequently he set a watchword, not against poetry, but against the abuse of it, just as Saint Paul condemned the misuse of philosophy, yet did not at all condemn the thing itself. Why, Plato praised poesy far more than we dare do, when he declared it to be far above man's wit, the very inspiring of a divine force. Instead of forbidding poetry, he did it high honour; he is its patron, not its adversary.

After this manner Sidney defended poesy. But, before ending his work, he thought it well to offer brief criticism of some of the most famous poets and poems of England and of his own time. This part is very valuable, showing us at it does what he thought of his predecessors and his competitors. First, of course, he spoke of the Father of English Poetry. "Chaucer, undoubtedly, did excellently in his *Troilus and Cressida;* of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he, in that misty time, could see so clearly, or that we, in this clear age, go so stumblingly after him." It is rather curious that Sidney selected Chaucer's second best work for mention, rather than *The Canterbury Tales*, specially full of the poetic food he must have loved most, rich in such narratives as the chivalrous adventures of Palamon and Arcite in their rival love for Emily, or the weary wanderings of Constance, or the bitter woes of Griselda, or the courtly triumph of Florent, or the fancy-laden "story of Cambuscan bold." But he was very scanty in his praise of

all. *The Mirror of Magistrates*, published in 1559, with Sackville's Induction, he declared to be "meetly furnished of beautiful parts." In Surrey's lyrics, only printed in 1551, though the author had died in 1547, he could only say that there were "many things tasting of a noble birth and worthy of a noble mind." *The Shepheards Kalender*, lately written by his friend Spenser and dedicated to himself, he said, "hath much poesy in his eclogues, worthy the reading;" but, "that same framing of his style to an old rustic language I dare not allow, since neither Theocritus in Greek, Virgil in Latin, nor Sannazzaro in Italian, did affect it." In that judgment he was half right, an occasional fault of Spenser being the affectation of obsolete words that his master, Chaucer, had used. Sidney's severity was just also, when he said that of other poems—whether those of Gower or Lydgate in former times or those of the crowd of writers in his own age—"I do not remember to have seen but few printed that have poetical sinews in them: for proof whereof, let but most of the verses be put in prose, and then ask the meaning, and it will be found that one verse did but beget another, without ordering, at the first, what should be at the last; which becomes a confused mass of words with a tinkling sound of rhyme, barely accompanied with reason."

Sidney's view of the drama was a grievously mistaken one, based upon the foolish traditional doctrine of the unities. "The stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day." Neither Marlowe nor Shakespeare nor Ben

Jonson had yet produced plays which would have convinced him of his error. The best and only commendable tragedy then written was *Gorboduc*, of which he said, "notwithstanding it is full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca's style, as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of poesy, yet, in truth it is very defectuous in the circumstances, which grieves me, because it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies. But if it be so in *Gorboduc*, how much more in all the rest? where you shall have Asia of the one side, and Afric of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the player when he comes in must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now shall you have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By-and-by we hear news of a shipwreck in the same place; then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke; and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave: while, in the meantime two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers; and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?" This very comical account of a tragical presentment, be it noted, was written before the fashion of studied scenery had grown up, almost before it was the practice to set a board conspicuously upon the stage, telling the audience that the scene was laid in such and such a place, or amid such and such circumstances.

Other portions of Sidney's dramatic criticisms are too

important to be passed by. *King Lear* not being yet written, to prove how nobly tragedy and comedy might be blended, he protested against the mongrel tragi-comedy then in vogue. "So falleth it out that, having indeed no right comedy in that comical part of our tragedy, we have nothing but scurrility, unworthy of chaste ears, or some extreme show of doltishness, indeed fit to lift up a loud laughter, but nothing else; where the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight, as the tragedy should be still maintained in a well-raised admiration. But our comedians think there is no delight without laughter; which is very wrong; for though laughter may come with delight, yet cometh it not of delight, as though delight should be the cause of laughter; but well may one thing breed both together. Nay, in themselves they have, as it were, a kind of contrariety. For delight we scarcely do but in things that have a conveniency to ourselves or to the general nature: laughter almost ever cometh of things most disproportioned to ourselves and nature. Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present: laughter hath only a scornful tickling. For example, we are ravished with delight to see a fair woman, and yet are far from being moved to laughter: we laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainly we cannot delight. We delight in good chances; we laugh at mischances. . . . . Yet deny I not that they may go well together. For as in Alexander's picture, well set out, we delight without laughter, and in twenty mad antics we laugh without delight; so in Hercules, painted with his great beard and furious countenance,

in a woman's attire, spinning at Omphale's commandment, it breeds both delight and laughter: for the representing of so strange a power in love procures delight, and the scornfulness of the action stirreth laughter. But I speak to this purpose, that all the end of the comical part be not upon such scornful matters as stir laughter only, but mix with it that delightful teaching which is the end of poesy. And the great fault, even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainly by Aristotle, is that they stir laughter in sinful things, which are rather execrable than ridiculous, or in miserable, which are rather to be pitied than scorned. For what is it to make folks gape at a wretched beggar and a beggarly clown; or, against the law of hospitality, to jest at strangers because they speak not English so well as we do? what do we learn since it is certain—

> Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se
> Quam quod ridiculos homines facit?

But rather a busy and lowering courtier and a heartless threatening Thraso, a self-wise seeming schoolmaster, a wry transformed traveller, these if we saw walk in stage names, which we play naturally, therein were delightful laughter, and teaching delightfulness."

Thus nobly wrote one of the ablest and wisest thinkers that the world has ever known. In indication of his mind, I should like to quote much else that follows this paragraph, especially the parts containing the thinker's estimate of eloquence, and of English as the fittest of all languages, save Greek, for its utterance. But when the

final playful paragraph of the whole treatise has been repeated, enough will have been done to show how large was the ability, how deep the wisdom shown by Sir Philip Sidney.

"So that since the ever praiseworthy poesy," he added, "is full of virtue breeding delightfulness, and void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning; since the blames laid against it are either false or feeble; since the cause why it is not esteemed in England is the fault of poet-apes not poets; since, lastly, our tongue is most fit to honour poesy and to be honoured by poesy; I conjure you, all that have had the evil luck to read this ink-wasting toy of mine, even in the name of the nine muses, no more to scorn the sacred mysteries of poesy; no more to laugh at the name of poets as though they were next inheritors to fools, no more to jest at the reverent title of 'a rhymer;' but to believe with Aristotle that they were the ancient treasurers of the Grecians' divinity; to believe with Bembus that they were the first bringers in of all civility; to believe with Scaliger that no philosophers' precepts can sooner make you an honest man than the reading of Virgil; to believe with Clauserus, the translator of Cornutus, that it pleased the heavenly Deity, by Hesiod and Homer, under the veil of fables, to give us all knowledge, logic, rhetoric, philosophy, natural and moral, and, *quid non?* to believe, with me, that there are many mysteries contained in poetry, which, of course, were written darkly, lest by profane wits it should be abused; to believe, with Landin, that they are so beloved of the gods that whatsoever they write proceeds

of a divine fury; lastly, to believe themselves when they tell you they will make you immortal by their verses. Thus doing, your name shall flourish in the printer's shops: thus doing, you shall be most fair, most rich, most wise, most all; you shall dwell upon superlatives; thus doing, though *libertino patre natus*, you shall suddenly grow *Herculea proles*,

Si quid mea carmina possunt:

thus doing, your soul shall be placed with Dante's Beatrice or Virgil's Anchises. But if (fie of such a but!) you be born so near the dull-making cataract of Nilus, that you cannot hear the planet-like music of poetry, if you have so earth-creeping a mind that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of poetry, or rather, by a certain rustical disdain, will become such a Mome as to be a Momus of poetry, then, though I will not wish unto you the asses' ears of Midas, nor to be driven by a poet's verses as Bubonax was to hang himself, nor to be rhymed to death as is said to be done in Ireland; yet this much curse I must send you, in behalf of all the poets—that, while you live, you live in love and never get favour for lacking skill of a sonnet, and when you die your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph."

The Defence of Poesie took altogether independent ground, but there were other books, about contemporary with it, having poetry for their theme. In 1575, George Gascoigne had written *Certayne Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Ryme in*

English,* very brief and sensible, but of a much more technical character than the small technical parts of Sidney's master-piece. This appears to be the earliest production of the kind, and,—if we except seven notable letters which passed between Edmund Spenser and Gabriel Harvey in the years 1579 and 1580, treating chiefly of their unnatural scheme for naturalizing the classical metres in English,†—none other of the sort preceded *The Defence*. In 1584 was published *A Treatise of the Airt of Scottis Poesie*, the product of King James's genius, ‡ and in 1586 appeared a valuable *Discourse of English Poetrie*, written by William Webbe, a student of Cambridge and probably a friend of Harvey's.§ Webbe was enthusiastic about the classical metres, and included in his treatise translations of two eclogues of Virgil into hexameters, and of a part of the *Shepheard's Kalendar* into sapphics. A part of the treatise, however, is skilful, Spenser's poem being mainly the text for critical remarks upon the various styles. From the parallelism in a few passages I am disposed to think that Webbe had seen *The Defence of Poesie* in manuscript, before writing his own humbler work. And I have hardly a doubt that a like privilege fell to George Puttenham, author of a longer and more ambitious *Arte of English Poesie*, published in 1589.‖ Some

* Haslewood, *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy*, vol. ii. pp. 3—12.

† Ibid., vol. ii.

‡ Ibid., vol. ii. pp. 101—117.

§ Ibid., vol. ii. pp. 17—95.

‖ Ibid., vol. i.

passages are strikingly like those written by Sidney, to whom reference is frequently made, as though he were dead. Puttenham's style was not bad, but he went to absurd lengths in the elaboration of rules for ornament, expression and so forth. One of the passages in which he turned from these subjects to offer sensible criticism contains a review of English poets. Chaucer was praised with discrimination, and Wyatt and Surrey were applauded as "the two chief lanterns of light to all others that have since employed their pens." For tragedy honour was done to Lord Buckhurst and to Edward Ferrys; and the Earl of Oxford and Richard Edwards, whose play of *Palamon and Arcite* was performed before the Queen when she visited Oxford in 1566, were mentioned as the foremost writers of interlude and comedy. Puttenham gave high praise to Sidney and Spenser for their skill in eclogues and pastorals, to Raleigh for ditties and amorous odes, most lusty, insolent, and passionate, and to Edward Dyer for elegy, sweet and solemn, and of high conceit. "But last in recital and first in degree," said this complimentary critic, "is the Queen our Sovereign Lady, whose learned, delicate, and noble muse easily surmounteth all the rest that have written before her time or since, for sense, sweetness, and subtilty, be it in ode, elegy, epigram, or any other kind of poem, heroic or lyric, wherein it shall please her Majesty to employ her pen, even by so much odds as her own excellent estate and degree exceedeth that of her most humble vassals." *

* Haslewood, vol. i. pp. 49—51.

The Defence of Poesie, written after *The Arcadia* and *Astrophel and Stella*, and therefore probably not until the year 1583, was the last of Sidney's longer writings. In 1584 or 1585, he penned a short *Discourse in Defence of the Earl of Leicester*. Angry at the libellous attack made upon his uncle in a scurrilous *Dialogue between a Scholar, a Gentleman, and a Lawyer*, better known as *Leicester's Commonwealth*, Sir Philip replied very indignantly, and in terms too furious to have much weight. It is probable that he soon repented of his work, and that his friends thought poorly of it. It was not published until some generations had elapsed.*

About contemporary with that work was another and more important undertaking, perhaps the last studied exercise of Sidney's pen. Pleased with a treatise *De Veritate Christianâ*, lately written by his friend Philip du Plessis Mornay, and anxious that its rich truths might be within reach of unlearned Englishmen, he began a translation of it. Before many chapters had been written, however, public matters claimed his attention, and, abandoning his literary occupations, he was led to spend all his strength in the world of politics. Yet the book was, in Sidney's eyes, too important to be neglected, and he therefore entrusted it to Arthur Golding, uncle to the Earl of Oxford, with a request that he would complete its translation as soon and as well as he could, and dedicate it, when done, to the Earl of Leicester. Golding—who, making a trade of translating books, worked quickly and cleverly, and conse-

* It was first printed by Collins, in the *Sidney Papers*.

quently in a life of seventy years rendered upwards of thirty—did his best. The translation was published in 1587, with the title, *A Worke concerning the Trewnesse of the Christian Religion.*

Its character can only be very briefly indicated. It opens with proof of the primary doctrine that there is a God, and then follows a demonstration that He is One, and that He is One in Three Persons. God, we are told, is the Essence pervading all things ; He is Action. As the Grecian poets said and Saint Paul repeated, we are His offspring ; in Him we live and move and have our being. From Him we come, by Him we exist, to Him we tend. But in His unity there is Trinity. First of all, there is a workful Power, Ability, the basis of all action, the principle without which nothing can exist. Secondly, there is Understanding, Reason, Voice, the utterance of the Divine Thought, the principle without which no action can be intelligent. Thirdly, there is Will, the principle without which no action can be wisely and successfully completed. This doctrine, it is shown rather fancifully and at great length, was darkly presented in all the old systems of philosophy ; it was developed by Zoroaster, by Plato, and by every other wise teacher among the ancients. Moreover, it is clearly imaged in all the ordering of nature. For example :— "In waters, we have the head of them in the earth, and the spring boiling out of it, and the stream which is made of them both sheddeth itself out far off from thence. It is but one self-same continual essence, which hath neither foreness nor afterness, save only in order, and not in time, that is to say, according to our con-

sidering of it, having respect to causes, not according to truth. For the well-head is not a head but in respect of the spring, nor the spring a spring but in respect of the well-head, nor a stream a stream but in respect of them both; and so all three be but one water, and cannot almost be considered one without another, howbeit that the one is not the other. It is an express mark of the original relations and persons co-essential in the only one essence of God."* From this doctrine it follows necessarily that nothing can be which is not appointed by God; good and evil are alike of his ordaining, the good to be wisely cultivated, and the evil to be made good by the wholesome use of its discipline. It is next shown that man's soul is immortal. This truth has been taught by all philosophers, and is unconsciously believed by all nations. Furthermore, man's nature is corrupt and in need of regeneration. God is the sovereign welfare of man, and therefore the chief sheet-anchor of man ought to be to return to God. But this he cannot do without religion, and it behoves him earnestly to seek and to follow that form which is best and purest. In ancient times the best form plainly was that shown to Israel. Israel was superior to all other nations in having clear knowledge of the one God, and not being suffered to worship departed heroes, or, still worse, to bow down to devil-inspired blocks of wood or stone; in possessing the Holy Scriptures; and in the promise of a Saviour who should come. The book closes with arguments concerning the need of

* *The Trewnesse of the Christian Religion* (ed. 1587), p. 67.

a Messiah, the Divine Word clothed in human flesh, and with proof that such an one was the Lord Jesus. "And therefore let us look up with sighs, and with sighs travel up towards the kingdom whose King is the Trinity, whose law is Charity, and whose measure is Eternity."*

That Sidney should have set his heart on translating such a work as this is characteristic. It was not a work likely to find much favour with either of the great sections into which the Church was already split. It satisfied the preconceived notions of neither Anglicans nor Puritans. It contained, we must admit, much that was faulty and defective. Yet it was the ablest work of one of the ablest Huguenots then living, and it embodied thoughts sanctioned by many of the greatest thinkers of the past. Mornay made those thoughts his own, and grouped them in his own way, but they were not invented by himself. The longing of wise schoolmen throughout the Christian ages had been to educe from the conflicting traditions of former times, and from the various opinions of the present, a systematic and harmonious view of Sacred Truth. In the ninth century, John Erigena had written his wonderful treatise *De Divisione Naturæ*, in which he summed up, far more tersely and pointedly than Mornay could do, nearly all that was most valuable in the modern work. In the thirteenth century, Bonaventura, in his *Compendium Theologicæ Veritatis*, and Aquinas, in parts of his *Summa Theologiæ*, had, less purely, and amid many other matters, made similar labour; and Wyclif, in his

* *The Trewnesse of the Christian Religion*, p. 641.

Trialogus, had used very eloquent language. More nobly than in any of these works and in an altogether different way, the contemporary author of *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, had sought, under poetical allegory, to present a generous scheme of the Divine plan concerning the human race. Of other teachers there were many, more or less memorable, who continued the same work, until Melancthon became the teacher of Hubert Languet, and Hubert Languet became the wise instructor of both Mornay and Sidney. Of the thinkers of this large school it was the aim, more or less modified, to prove that truth was one and universal, that many falsehoods—chief of all, said some, the great lie of Rome—had been perpetrated, yet, that the truth still lay, and from the beginning had lain, in every human heart, that nothing was needed but one grand, broad system of Religion to gather up all worshippers, however differing, into one temple. There was one Divine Mind, they taught, filling the world; of it every human mind was a particle, or an emanation, and the purpose of all this permitted struggle between good and evil on the earth was the development of a larger righteousness than was otherwise possible. In what way Sidney shared this thought is shown by scattered expressions throughout his writings, but mainly by his earnest desire to procure a reproduction of his friend Du Plessis Mornay's work.*

* The heresy-hunters of Sir Philip Sidney's day, and afterwards, found pleasure in accusing him of religious error, because he and Greville were accustomed to have theological and philosophical disputations with Giordano Bruno, an Italian long resident in London. Bruno, with

It is curious to mark how very maturely, in his life of less than two-and-thirty years, Sir Philip Sidney thought about everything. He followed authorship only as a pastime, his main ambition being to work actively as a soldier and a statesman, for the welfare of his own country, and for the overthrow of foreign tyrannies. Yet in almost every walk of literature he left the marks of his masterly tread. What would he not have done if he had lived even but a little longer? if, with matured judgment, he had substituted the heroical romance of *King Arthur* for the heroic pastoral of *The Arcadia*—if his trained muse had broken through the Italian bondage of the day, and he had written verse as far superior to the better sort of his written poems, as these were to his more crude productions; if he had written other works as eloquent and as profound, as polished and as true, as *The Defence of Poesie;* if he had fulfilled the promise of giving such deep, wise, earnest teaching of religion as was made in the begun translation of *The Trewnesse of the Christian Religion;* if moreover, his genius, not content with any or all of these ways, had sought out some new roads through which to travel to glorious issues, and serve as illustrious examples for many to follow? What, again, would have been the issue if his splendid patronage of letters had been prudently maintained and extended? "Gentle Sir Philip Sidney!" exclaimed Thomas Nash

many eccentricities, was an honest, far-seeing man. He was accused, without proof given, of atheism. Perhaps his greatest real offence was the maintaining that only the Hebrews were descended from Adam, the other races being the offspring of earlier parents.

In his *Pierce Penniless*, "thou knewest what belonged to a scholar; thou knewest what pains, what toils, what travail conduct to perfection. Well couldst thou give every virtue his encouragement, every wit his due, every writer his desert, 'cause none more virtuous, witty, or learned than thyself. But thou art dead in thy grave, and hast left too few successors of thy glory, too few to cherish the sons of the muses, or water with their plenty those budding hopes which thy bounty erst planted!"

Budding hopes without number Sidney's generous friendship quickened during his fair life. Not only did his large genius influence the minds of many who lived to perpetuate his thoughts; his courtly eminence also enabled him to give material encouragement to very many. In both ways his most illustrious debtor was Edmund Spenser, who lived to lament, as he said, that "God hath disdained the world of that most noble spirit which was the hope of all learned men and the patron of my young muses."* Sidney received from Spenser more perhaps than he gave to him; for in the world of letters Spenser was by far the greater man of the two. But without Sidney's help the author of *The Faerie Queene* would have trudged but lamely through the world. Allusion has already been made to the early intimacy between these men, and part of the beautiful dedication of the *Shepheard's Kalendar* "to him that was the president of nobleness and chivalry," has been quoted.

* The dedication, to the Countess of Pembroke, of *The Ruins of Time*, published in 1591.

Many of the thoughts contained in that poem found expression in Sidney's life; and he returned no more than just payment in procuring for his friend the appointment of secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, made Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1580. Had he lived long enough to attain the foremost rank in the Elizabethan Court, of which every promise was being given just before his death, we may be quite sure that he would have provided for Spenser better subsistence than was possible for him in exile at Kilcolman Castle; and then the great poet would not have had, in his forty-sixth year, to flee for safety to England, having his newborn babe and all his goods and papers burnt by the rebel Irish, and presently dying broken-hearted and poverty-stricken with the *The Faerie Queene* only half-finished.*

But there were many men of whom, much more than of Spenser, Sidney must be considered the patron; and there were many others, with more boldness than genius, who perplexed him with their suit for patronage. Of neither class, however, is it my business, if, with our scanty knowledge, that were possible, to attempt a detailed enumeration. "He was of a very munificent spirit," writes Aubrey, "and liberal to all lovers of learning, and to those that pretended to any acquaintance with Parnassus; insomuch that he was cloyed and

* Even in death Sidney was Spenser's friend. Writing of Queen Elizabeth, in 1595, the latter said—

> "Yet found I liking in her royal mind,
> Not for my skill but for that shepherd's sake."
>
> *Colin Clout's come Home Again*, ll. 454, 455.

surfeited with the poetasters of those days." Of the many books dedicated to him two claim to be specially referred to, for their evidence of the esteem in which he was held by very diverse thinkers even before the period of his greatest fame.

One was by a writer, formerly an Oxford student and possibly then known to Sidney, Stephen Gosson, now a Puritan preacher of moderate fame and the author of some creditable pastorals. But his skill in verse did not hinder him from writing, in 1579, *The Schoole of Abuse*, fiercely directed "against poets, pipers, players, and their excusers." This book, as well as *The Ephemerides of Phialo*, which appeared in the same year, he dedicated, with singularly bad taste, to Mr. Philip Sidney, the acknowledged friend and excuser of poets, pipers, and players; and by him Spenser tells us that Gosson "was for his labour scorned; if at least it lie in the goodness of that nature to scorn. Such folly is it," he adds, "not to regard aforehand the nature and quality of him to whom we dedicate our books."*

The other book to be noted was Nicholas Litchfield's translation, published in 1581, of a treatise *De Re Militari* by a Spanish author, Luis Gutierres de la Vega. Litchfield, also an Oxford man, issued the book under Sidney's patronage, on the plea that he could find no one more forward to further or favour military knowledge than he was, he being, of all men, ever the

* Haslewood, *Ancient and Critical Essays*, vol. ii. p. 288.

most ready and adventurous in every exercise of war and chivalry.*

Poetry in literature, and warlike exercise in active life, were, in his later years, the favourite employments of Sidney. But he never lost interest in subjects which had chiefly delighted him in the earlier period devoted by him to zealous study. It was at his instigation, doubtless, that two men, whose names are now hardly known, though famous in their day, applied themselves to philosophy. The first of these was Lewis Bryskitt, who, as we saw, attended upon Sidney throughout the three years of his foreign travel. He came back to serve in Ireland under Lord Grey of Wilton, probably through the recommendation of his young master or of Sir Henry Sidney, to be the honoured friend of Spenser, who seems to have relieved the dullness of Irish life by teaching him Greek, and to write better prose than verse.† The fruit of his joint studies with Sidney appeared in a translation from the Italian of Giraldo, not published till 1606, though written fully twenty years earlier, and entitled *A Discourse of Civill Life, containing the Ethike Part of Morall Philosophie*. Having, as he said, greatly envied the happiness of the Italians who had in their mother-tongue writers who agreeably and intelligently presented all that Plato or Aristotle had obscurely or confusedly written, he essayed to do the same for his own countrymen, and "to set down in English the precepts of those parts of moral philosophy

* Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, vol. i. col. 490 ; Zouch, p. 194.

† Todd, *Spenser*, pp. xxvi.—xxviii.

whereby our youth might, without spending of so much time as the learning of those other languages require, speedily enter into the right course of virtuous life." As a loving follower of Sir Philip Sidney, as a zealous friend of Spenser, as a humble precursor of Lord Bacon, Bryskitt deserves to be not wholly forgotten.

We have yet greater reason for remembering the name of Abraham Fraunce. He was a native of Shropshire, followed Sidney as a pupil at Shrewsbury School, and was in due time sent by him to Cambridge, as a pensioner of Saint John's College.* When he came to London as student at Gray's Inn, he appears to have had admission to the Areopagus of which we have already seen something, and to have heartily adopted its rules for the use of classical measures. When Sidney died, Sidney's sister took him under her patronage, and therefore his pastoral history of Phillis and Amintas, told in hexameters, was published in 1591, as *The Countess of Pembroke's Yvychurch.* But before this, still expanding thoughts which he had borrowed from Sidney, he had written *The Lawiers Logike.* The book is curious as being almost the first attempt to separate logic from its general scholastic seclusion, and give it dignified employment in the actual business of life. Here, he said, "after application of logic to law and an examination of law by logic, I made plain the precepts of the one by the practice of the other, and called my book *The Lawiers Logike,* not as though logic were tied only unto law, but for that our law is most

* Cooper, *Athenæ Cantabrigienses,* vol. ii. p. 119.

fit to express the precepts of logic." Still more important was a later work by Fraunce. This was a repetition of his logic, with the examples taken, for greater clearness and the entertainment of novices, from Spenser's *Shepheards Calendar*. Following the same clever fancy he used parts of the *Faerie Queene* in elucidation of his *Arcadian Rhetoric*. Fraunce's will was often superior to his skill, but in all that he wrote he showed the large influence for good exerted upon him by his early patron, Sir Philip Sidney, and his later patroness, the Countess of Pembroke.

But this chapter would have no end, were I to say all that could be said about Sidney's influence upon the thinkers and writers, great and little, of his generation and the generations following. I should have to trace the early history of the London Society of Antiquaries, said to have begun in his friendly meetings with Camden and other students of the past. I should have to sum up pastorals, and repeat sonnets, and quote pieces of criticism, innumerable. I should have to unfold some of the richest treasures of even the greatest writers—of Shakespeare and Bacon and Milton—in proof of their large debts to this splendid thinker.

And all this of a man who died at the age of thirty-one, who had only lived to make a fair start in the world, when the end came suddenly. Spenser's life was short; but Spenser, born a year before Sidney, outlived him by thirteen years, and, in those thirteen years, wrote most of the works upon which his great fame rests. Shakespeare died in the very prime of manhood, but Shakespeare lived twenty years longer

than Sidney, and, if his life had been as brief, *Hamlet* and *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, would never have been written. Neither Francis Bacon nor Ben Jonson could be called old men when they ended life; but Jonson's years reached only one of being twice as many as Sidney's, and Bacon's were one more than twice as many. Had a few years more been added to the life of Thomas Hobbes, it would have been thrice as long as Sidney's. Among men of real genius in the Elizabethan age, the life of Christopher Marlowe—spent, not in noble work for civilization and Christianity, but in riot and debauchery, and ended, not upon the battle-field, but in a pot-house brawl—was alone shorter than Sidney's; but Sidney's power, not confined to the mere wealth of fancy, was far greater than Marlowe's. The one man, who deserved honour for nothing else, penned four dramas, bright with sublime flashes of untrained genius. The other, to whose estimation among men his writings, clever as they are, add little, idling with pastoral romance and love-sonnets, wrote both in a manner hardly to be rivalled; and tempted to venture on the untried ground of learned criticism, produced a work which must ever be regarded as a model of pure language and of subtle thought.

In the world of letters, then, Sir Philip Sidney took, for his years, rank singularly high. But we must never forget that literature was only his amusement. He knew that he had statesmanly and martial powers, which he was eager to be using. He longed, with the wild earnestness of a caged bird, for room to take

his part in the great battle of freedom which was going on around him. For such work he was best fitted, and it is for the glorious beginning made by him herein that we owe him largest honour. But, knowing this, we can only the more marvel that the songs with which he lightened his captivity were so eloquent, and that the truths which his youth enforced in idle moments came out of the depths of so mature a mind.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WORLD OF POLITICS.

1584—1585.

"HER MAJESTY," wrote Sir Philip Sidney on Sunday, the 21st of July, 1584, in a letter to his friend Sir Edward Stafford, at that time Ambassador at Paris, "seems affected to deal in the Low Country matters, but I think nothing will come of it. We are half persuaded to enter into the journey of Sir Humphrey Gilbert very eagerly, whereunto your Mr. Hakluyt hath served for a very good trumpeter."* These two sentences sum up Sidney's main political thoughts for a period long before and for some time after this present writing of them. For twelve years past, from the date of his visit to France, Germany, and Italy, when he had made quick youthful observations of the troublous state of Europe, the grand wish of his life had been to witness and to join in procuring the overthrow of Spanish power. He saw the mischief Spain was doing everywhere, but most of all in the Netherlands. He listened with no careless ears to accounts of the cruelties done by the Duke of Alva, and of such tragical deaths as those of Counts Egmont and Hoorne. Even

* *Sidney Papers*, vol. i., p. 298.

then he yearned to join in the strife and to do his best towards ending it. When, in 1577, he went as Ambassador to the Emperor of Germany and to the Elector Palatine, we found him very eloquently urging the formation of a great Protestant league against Spain and Rome, so as to protect not only the oppressed Netherlands but all the other States then in danger. Therein he was quite discouraged; and for nearly ten years more we hear nothing of the projected league. Sick at heart, he came home, and spent much time in the arrangement of family matters, and in idle waiting upon Queen Elizabeth. Not satisfied with the gay life of the Court, he showed some slight inclination to go voyaging with Captain Frobisher, and very strong desires to cross over into the Low Countries and serve as a volunteer under his friend Duke Casimir, or his worthier friend Prince William of Orange. But from each undertaking he was hindered either by Hubert Languet's arguments, or by his own convictions of the uselessness of the attempt, or by his father's intercessions and the needs of his troubled family. He therefore stayed in England and worked as nobly as he could, amid many disadvantages and through grievous temptations, in his own home, at Court, and, when occasion arose, in Parliament. After Languet's death in 1581 and his own forced visit to Flanders in the spring of 1582, he corresponded with Du Plessis Mornay, and others, respecting the progress of affairs. He lost none of his interest in foreign politics; but he seems to have abandoned all thought of going as a soldier to the Netherlands, where now that Duke of Anjou whom he

hated and despised was blinding most men's visions and dazzling even the clear eyesight of the Prince of Orange. Therefore he gave the greater heed to the schemes of which, as he said, Sir Humphrey Gilbert was the captain and Mr. Richard Hakluyt the trumpeter. Though led by personal and family reasons to abandon his charter for the colonization of a part of America, and to spend a year or so, as we are to infer, in quiet home enjoyments and in genial literary avocations, his interest was not lessened. He must have mourned over Gilbert's heroic melancholy death, and longed for an opportunity of prosecuting his favourite plans, before his attention was specially directed to the Low Countries by some incidents occurring in the summer of 1584. The first of these was the death of his old opponent the Duke of Anjou.

Sidney had last seen Anjou at Antwerp, in March of 1582. Thither, as we noticed, he and his uncle of Leicester and many other courtiers, had been sent to do honour to Queen Elizabeth's intended husband. Various circumstances, however, led to a postponement of the marriage arrangements. The Duke himself, knowing how strong was the English feeling against him, perhaps began to think his case hopeless. Instead of paying his intended visit to Queen Elizabeth, he remained in the Netherlands, where there seemed no limit to the honour shown to him. On the 18th of May, 1582, his twenty-eighth birthday, there was an especially grand festival, attended by the Prince of Orange and every other man of mark then in Antwerp. It was also attended by some assassins, and, in

the midst of the feasting, Prince William was shot with such effect that all thought him dead. The consternation may be imagined. Suddenly the rumour spread, that the Duke of Anjou, just made Duke of Brabant, was instigator of the murder. Was he not—people everywhere whispered — brother to that execrable Charles, and darling son of that still more execrable Queen Mother, Catherine, at whose instigation, ten years before, the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew had been wrought? Was not this foul act the signal for another slaughter of the Protestants, just as then the cruel attempt upon Coligni's life had preceded the horrible deeds that ensued? There is little doubt that the suspicion was unfounded. However, the Prince's wound was not so disastrous as at first men feared. Yet it was far too fatal; for the alarm of it and its supposed ending, killed the good and high-minded Princess of Orange, whose acquaintance Sidney had made in the spring of 1577. But William himself recovered, and in due time the real would-be murderer was found and punished. Thus the suspicions about Anjou were stifled; but that they should ever have arisen shows the distrust latent under all the pompous professions of goodwill. Presently the shows and festivals were resumed, and they lasted to the end of the year, though interrupted by another attempt at assassination, this time directed against both Anjou and Orange.

It was arranged that the Prince and the Duke should exercise a sort of joint government over the States. But before long Anjou was persuaded to be jealous of his partner. Then it was that he matured a very weak plan,

which, though not an imitation of the Saint Bartholomew scheme, had just enough similarity to couple the two in men's minds. He resolved to take possession of all the ports and fortifications, and then to announce himself the supreme ruler of the Low Countries. The 15th of January, 1583, was the day appointed for the mad undertaking, but it was postponed, and a report of the project being suffered to get abroad, the people were forewarned, and enabled to put themselves in a state of defence. The only issue was a loss of all the false credit which the Duke had hitherto succeeded in maintaining.

So much of Anjou's story it has seemed needful for me to recount in proof of Sidney's right judgment as to his thorough worthlessness and viciousness. But he need not be followed into the year or more of ignominy and obscurity which attended upon his self-occasioned disgrace. Strange to say, Queen Elizabeth still showed affection for him. But the long talked-of marriage was now out of the question. He paid no fresh visit to England, and did nothing else worth remembering. At last, on the 1st of June, 1584, in the thirty-first year of his age, he died at Château Thierry, with so much sweating of blood and such internal torture that poison was suspected.

The news had not long reached England when the Queen resolved to send a special message of sympathy to King Henry the Third, and, rather curiously, she chose for her messenger Sir Philip Sidney, the man who, of all her courtiers, had been most conspicuous and plain-spoken in his aversion to the Duke while he lived. Not much to his liking could have been the instructions delivered

to him about the middle of July, telling, as they did, of Elizabeth's extreme grief at the loss of so rare and noble a friend, and of her unfeigned love and esteem for the despicable Queen-Mother. Following those compliments were some words of very different import, added, it may be, at Sidney's own request, just as, seven years before, when he was sent with similar messages of condolence to Germany, he procured the addition of a sanction for discussing other and more important matters. In the present case he was to see whether King Henry was disposed to do anything for the relief of "those poor afflicted people of the Low Countries." He was to show how, without some present assistance, they would not be able to hold out much longer, an issue which, whatever care was taken for the States themselves, ought to be anxiously prevented by all princes who heeded their own welfare. Indeed, the world had wondered why King Henry, considering the place and range which he held in Christendom, should so long have overslipped the means proper to the restraining of Spanish greatness. Was not that greatness increasing every day? King Philip lacked only the quiet possession of the Low Countries to make him the most absolute monarch that had ever been in this part of the world, and the effects thereof would shortly most dangerously appear, if the same were not better stayed and provided for through God's goodness than they were likely to be through the foresight of those princes who were chiefly concerned. The King of France, especially, if things were carelessly suffered much longer to continue as they had

been and now were, would presently find himself forced into a position carrying no small blemish to his honour and very great peril to his estate.*

But, as it happened, neither the words of condolence, nor the discordant, though very wholesome, words of warning were to be uttered by Sir Philip Sidney. He had, at great trouble and expense, made all the preparations needful for the creditable presentment of himself before the French Court, he had even gone some way on his journey, when information came that King Henry the Third was gone to Lyons and could not receive the message unless it were kept till his return to Paris in a couple of months' time.† Therefore the message was not, as it would appear, delivered at all. Perhaps this was just as well. The formalities of condolence were quite uncalled-for, and no good could have come from the most eloquent language which it would have been possible to offer to the French King respecting the Netherlands.

By the hindrance of his projected embassage, Sidney's attention to continental matters was not at all lessened. The whole state of Europe, but especially events in the Netherlands, interested him. Exactly a month after the death of Anjou, William, Prince of Orange, in the very prime of his manhood, in the full vigour of his large mind, and just at the time when there seemed most need that he should live and guide the States with his masterly hand, as he had already guided them

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, E vi. fols. 241, 242.

† State Paper Office MSS., *Scottish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxxv. No. 61.

through so many years of heavy peril, had been murdered. Hardly could a greater trouble have fallen upon Europe. William had not only been the centre of unity to the United Provinces, he had not only forced respect to himself and his great cause from the rival Protestant princes of Germany; by his chivalrous deportment he had even enlisted much Catholic sympathy on his side, and King Philip of Spain regarded him as his most terrible opponent. Where could be found another man as great, or in any degree as fit to set in order all the complicated, often conflicting, elements of strength, and direct them against the one great enemy of all true progress in Europe as it was then troubled? What was there now that Spanish and Romish treachery, working zealously as one power, would not be able to accomplish? What further resistance, of any lasting value, could now be offered to the persistent encroachments of that policy which aimed at nothing less than the overthrow of all liberty in the exercise of religious thought, or in the pursuit of political freedom?

These were the gloomy prospects that presented themselves to all Englishmen, but to none more forcibly than to Sir Philip Sidney and his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham. The gloom was not lessened because a few fitful flames, giving hope to some ardent souls, rose up from amidst the confusion. Not many days after the ugly deed, which the true instincts of all men attributed to Spanish agency, Walsingham himself wrote to say that thus far the people of the Netherlands had shown themselves but little amazed by the occurrence. "Rather the wickedness of the deed hath hardened

their stomachs to hold out as long as they shall have any means of defence."* And Sidney's friend, William Herle, in a letter of rather later date, had said, "It has created no astonishment at all, either of the people or magistrates, by fear or division, but rather generally animated them with a great resolution of courage and hatred engraved in them, to revenge the foulness of the act committed on the person of the Prince by the tyrant of Spain."† But now that the head was gone, there was no sufficient strength left in the members. "The ducats of Spain, Madam," wrote the envoy of Catherine de' Medici to his mistress, "are trotting about in such fashion that they have vanquished the courage of multitudes."‡ On the 17th of August, Dendermonde gave in; on the 17th of September Ghent surrendered; and other towns of more or less importance followed in their submission to the vigorous attacks, both of gold and of steel, made by Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma.

This Duke of Parma was undoubtedly the ablest regent yet sent from Spain into the Low Countries. Born in 1546, he was but a few months younger than his uncle, Don John of Austria, whose career it was in great measure his ambition to surpass. A wild love of fighting had led him, in his youth, to disguise himself, go out into the streets by night, and then challenge every armed stranger whom he met. Incredible stories were told of the great things he

* MSS. in State Paper Office; cited by Motley, *United Netherlands*, vol. i. p. 13.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. vol. i. p. 19.

had done at the battle of Lepanto, in 1571. In December, 1577, he had been sent into Flanders with reinforcements for Don John, and upon the latter's death in the following spring, he had been appointed his successor. For now more than six years he had been acting with a measure of honesty in a dishonest cause, and, as far as was possible, he had done his bad work well. But for that reason the English party, of which Walsingham was head and Sidney a leading member, looked upon him with all the more aversion. These last successes which he had gained seemed to threaten disaster and ruin. If he continued to make progress in subjecting the Netherlands, what limit could there be to the mischief?

Sidney had excuse for the gloomy discontented thoughts which perplexed him at this time. Looking first at France, of all nations save Flanders the nearest and most closely allied to England, he found that King Henry, if he was a good master to his courtiers and favourites, was certainly not a great king. He was wholly busied in his pleasures, his crown domains were exhausted, and by his multiplication of imposts he was rapidly weakening the affections of his subjects. His people were frivolous, his nobles prone to revolution, and consequently his country was ready, even now, through scorn of his effeminate vices, either to become a prey to the one assailant who might be strongest, or to be broken in pieces among many.* That judgment, very soon confirmed by actual occurrences, was not Sidney's alone.

* Fulke Greville, pp. 94, 95.

His friend Sir Edward Stafford, writing from Paris to Walsingham, described Henry as "a king who seeketh nothing but to impoverish his poor people and to enrich a couple; that careth not what cometh after his death so that he may rove on whilst he liveth, and that careth neither for doing his own state good nor his neighbour's state harm." This very negative hope was all that Stafford, a wise honest observer of the times, could have. "In my opinion;" he added, "seeing we cannot be so happy as to have a king to concur with us to do any good, yet are we happy to have one that his humour serveth him not to concur with others to do us harm, and I beseech you, Sir, seeing that no way can be found as yet to make him look into his estate to do the one, let us keep him in the humour from harkening to the other, and for which I can devise no better way than in humouring him and feeding him with vanities and shows of delight, which he careth more for than for matters that touch him nearer."* To feed his vanity the badge of the Order of the Garter was about to be conferred upon the King, but clearly from him could be expected none of that help which Sidney longed to see afforded to the Netherlands.

In Germany things had no more hopeful aspect. Resting, as in a dream, upon the notion that they could never be deprived of their venerable freedom and independence, the people had, as it were, thrown the bridle upon the neck of the Emperor, and it was easy

* *Burghley Papers* (ed. Murdin), p. 416.

to see whither he was carrying them. The royal branch of Austria, from dependence upon the King of Spain, had fallen into servitude, and now nearly all of the best quality of the nation had been so won over to his service, that his credit was become as great as even that of Charles the Emperor had been in the height of his power. And then, to confirm and multiply chances of danger — we are told — Sidney discovered how that creeping monarchy of Rome, by her arch-instruments the Jesuits, had already planted schools in all the chief of the reformed cities, "intending thus to corrupt this well-believing people with that old forbidden tree of knowledge," urging them, as far as was possible, to sin desperately against the plain law of Christian duty. Upon them these raisers of deadly mist had so worked, that there was no strength left for healthy action. In this way were both Spain and Rome seeking to ruin Germany. What would not be the issue of their "crafty conquering ends"?

But worse than all was the danger engendered among the German princes themselves, who, between the fatal strife of Lutherans and Calvinists which was among them, amid selfish hopes, and fears, and jealousies, and temptations, and all other unnatural seeds of division, were bringing themselves into such condition that they could not but become an easy prey to the watchful, insatiable, and much-promising ambition of the Spaniard. Instead of being able to help the Netherlands, their own freedom, if not voluntarily given up, would soon be taken from them, just as Flanders was now being enslaved

Nearly all the potentates of Europe seemed now to depend upon King Philip the Second. The Pope and the Cardinals were of course altogether his servants. All the other masters of Italy, even those with most spirit and judgment, had been bought up and made his pensioners. His recent acquisition of Portugal was the latest instance of his great and evil power.*

In that hopeless condition, Sidney said to himself and to others, were the politics of Europe. Everywhere the real enemy, whether open or concealed, was Spain. Everywhere the same Philip was at work, disorganizing nations, upsetting governments, undermining religious beliefs, scheming the overthrow of every power save his own. Not even England, the country which he most hated and most envied, was at all safe. "Besides a universal terror upon all princes," wrote Fulke Greville of his friend, "this wakeful patriot saw that this immense power of Spain did cast a more particular aspect of danger upon his native country, and such as was not likely to be prevented or resisted by any other antidote than a general league among free princes, to undertake this undertaker at home." †

In that sentence we have a key to many of Sidney's thoughts during the autumn of 1584 and much of the ensuing year. The idea of a general Protestant league,—which, had it been, might have made powerless the Catholic bond now being organized by the Duke of

* Fulke Greville, pp. 94—101. *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, E vi. fols. 242, 243.

† Fulke Greville, p. 102.

Guise and King Philip, and at a later time to occasion very serious mischief,—had been a favourite with him when he went to Germany in 1577, and towards its formation he still struggled. But on one important point his opinion had altered. With no loss of sympathy for the Low Country cause, he had ceased to regard the Netherlands as the fittest battle-ground for fighting out the great strife between freedom and despotism. As long, he said, as Spain had peace at home, authority from the Pope, and credit with other nations, as long as the world had men willing to fight, and money with which to keep them, the war in the Netherlands could never be ended. That was the best fortified part of all the Spanish dominions. It would be hard for the English ever to become masters in the field of Flanders. To attempt it was but a resting upon "that ever betraying fallacy of undervaluing our enemies, or of settling undertaking-questions upon market-men's intelligence; which confident ways, without any curious examination as to what power the adverse party hath prepared to encounter, by defence, invasion, or division, must probably make us losers both in men, money, and reputation. There were but two ways left to frustate this ambitious monarch's dangers; the one, that which diverted Hannibal, and, by setting fire to his own house, made him draw in his spirits to comfort his heart; the other, that of Jason, by fetching away his golden fleece, and not suffering any man quietly to enjoy that which every man so much affected." *

* Fulke Greville, pp. 102—104.

Sidney's plan was certainly a bold one. To carry war into the bowels of Spain, he urged, was the safest, quickest, and most dignified proceeding. He suggested several ways in which it might be done. In the first place, there was Don Antonio, the claimant for the kingdom of Portugal against the Spanish usurpation. With a little encouragement from England, could not the national spirit of the Portuguese be aroused, and would not their insurrection strike a great blow at the hated power? Whether Antonio were aided or not, could not means be found by which the overweening pride of Spain, so long the scourge of others, would be brought to scourge itself? Sidney pointed to Seville. There, he showed, was to be found a fair city, built in a very fertile region, and of rare mercantile wealth, but inhabited by an effeminate race of people; would it not be very easy to capture it? were there not many ambitious generals, needy soldiers, and greedy mariners who, with nothing but the English authority to back them, would do the work by themselves? Or there was Cadiz, the key to Philip's best and richest traffic; could it not be wisely and easily conquered by some party of adventurers, and thus a thorn be lodged in the enemy's side? Surely some such diverting enterprise was feasible. If it seemed audacious, would not the very audacity of the undertaking arouse others, and suddenly stir up many spirits to move against the one power by which they all had long been slavishly entrapped?*

* Fulke Greville, pp. 106—108.

But if any undertaking of that kind were thought too full of charge, hazard, and difficulty, said Sir Philip, let us, at any rate, keep firm hold of the seas. He besought the Queen wisely to consider how, as if specially for the maintenance of England's great birthright, nature had made all naval wars far more cheap, proper, and commodious to her than any expedition upon land could possibly be. England had good claim to be regarded as mistress of the sea, and by steadily asserting this claim, her Majesty would most surely be procuring honour to herself, advantage to her commerce, and reputation to her people. Ought she not especially, just now, while cloudy humours and vague questions were everywhere prevailing between herself and other princes, to keep a strong and permanent fleet ready for any emergency? Such a fleet would enable her to exercise a regal inquisition, as it were, one worthy of a sea-sovereign, one whereby the interests of her own subjects and of her allies might be looked after "without wronging friends or neighbours," and Her Majesty be enabled to direct "a clear perspective glass unto her enemies' mercantile and martial traffic, enabling her so to balance this ambitious leviathan of Spain, that the little fishes around might travel, multiply, and live quietly by him." *

And not only that: Sidney urged that England should offer open protection to Rochelle, Brest, Bordeaux, and all other places on the Continent which were distressed on account of their religion—not with the intent of reconquering any part of those ancient do-

* Fulke Greville, pp. 108, 109.

minions to which the English sovereign had venerable title—but solely, "to keep those humble religious souls free from oppression in that super-jesuitical sovereignty." In thus coming forward as the protectress of all afflicted states, would not Her Majesty be, at the same time, adding much to the honourable fame and power of England, and stirring up many timorous persons and cities to an open avowal of the Protestant faith which they now held in secret? Would not even the greatest and freest cities be encouraged to go on and to enter more heartily into the battle against Spain? Nay, would not even the better sort of Catholic princes, now, for want of outlet to these powers, servilely breaking their hopes and running out upon the ground like water, turn round and choose to shake off the costly and hateful yoke of mountebank holiness, put upon them by Spanish Rome, and presently mingle their counsels and forces with ours? * "This way of a balancing union among princes would prove a quieter rest for them, and sounder foundations for us than our former parties did when we conquered France, more by factious and ambitious assistance, than by any odds of our bows, or beef-eaters, as the French were then scornfully pleased to term us, when, in the pride of our conquests we strove to gripe more than was possible for us to hold, as appears by our being forced to come away, and leave our ancestors' blood and bones behind for monuments, not of enjoying, but of over-griping and of expulsion." †

* Fulke Greville, pp. 110—112. † Ibid., p. 109*.

After that fashion Sir Philip Sidney, in his private thinking, and in the free utterance of his thoughts before Queen and Court, made a survey of the condition and the needs of Europe in his day; the main result of all his argument being to prove the possibility and expedience of a perfect reconciliation and alliance between England and the Protestant powers and France—if the better nature of its people might be brought into proper action—and an utterly irreconcileable division between them and Spain. If the Queen, he urged, for a main pledge of this new offensive and defensive league, would take up her rightful position as Defendress of the Faith, and as the foremost champion of all true noble thought, there would be some prevention of this boundless power, there would be "a safe unvizarding of this masked triplicity between Spain, Rome, and the jesuitical faction of France."*

But though Sidney bravely and eloquently urged the seeking of this end, and though it thoroughly consorted with the principles of his high-minded father-in-law, the Secretary of State, he was not at all hopeful about it. In the policy of Queen Elizabeth and Lord Burghley, now much to be blamed for his pliant following of her Majesty's whims, as well as for his own crooked, though would-be patriotic, dealings, there was no ground for hope to any right-minded thinker. "Sorry I am," wrote Walsingham, in a very memorable letter to Davison, then ambassador to the Netherlands, "to see the course that is taken in this weighty

* Fulke Greville, pp. 113, 114.

cause, for we will neither help those poor countries ourselves, nor yet suffer others to do it." Then he went on to speak of the underhand conduct of those in higher authority than he was, and of the great discredit which must ensue, not only to the States, but also to her Majesty, "as never a wise man that seeth it and loveth her, but lamenteth it from the bottom of his heart."*

Sidney lived to see that his favourite project of an European league was impracticable, that it would require greater resolution, union, and expense than the natural diffidence and apathy of the Queen could well endure. Seeing, we are told, how the freedom of action was taken away, or at the least obstructed by the fatal evils of ignorance, or the fallacious counsels of ministers, he concluded that the only creditable means left was to trust to his own hand, and to assail the King of Spain as an independent enemy.† He was slow, however, in coming to this conclusion. The political thoughts which I have been presenting as nearly as possible in his own words, or in the words of Fulke Greville, his kinsman, friend, and fellow-thinker on these matters, may be considered as having been firmly lodged in his mind throughout the winter of 1584 and 1585. But they were not his only thoughts. Many other subjects at this time claimed his interest.

Some came to him in his capacity of Member of Parliament. The former Parliament, in which we found

* Motley, *United Netherlands*, vol. i. p. 90.

† Fulke Greville, pp. 123, 124.

him sitting during the early months of 1581, had never given much satisfation to the Queen, and therefore, after many prorogations, it was dissolved and a new one summoned. Sir Philip Sidney was again elected, probably as a knight for his native county of Kent.

The House was opened by her Majesty on Monday, the 23rd of November,* and on the 27th it began work, which, throughout the session, was heavy, rather than important. Sidney's name is first mentioned under the date of Tuesday, the 8th of December, when he was placed on a Committee to consider a very insignificant Bill for the preservation of timber in the County of Sussex.† More interesting work fell to him on the 14th of the month, a Bill for the confirmation of letters patent issued to Walter Raleigh, Esquire, for the discovery and occupation of new lands, being then committed to him, to Sir Francis Drake, and to some others.‡ Three days later the Bill was returned to the House without the alteration of a single word,§ and on the 18th, after many arguments had been offered, and a proviso added, it was read for the third time.‖ Unfortunately, we have no record of these discussions, and cannot, therefore, tell the precise part taken by Sidney in the handling of a subject always attractive to him, but at this time of especial interest.

Raleigh, born some time before Sidney, was now in his thirty-fourth year. His mother having been twice

* D'Ewes, p. 332. † Ibid., p. 337.
‡ Ibid., p. 339. § Ibid., p. 340.
‖ Ibid., p. 341.

married, he was half-brother to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and his junior by about thirteen years. He had quitted Oxford in the year of Sidney's entry, and, going to the Continent, had enrolled himself as a volunteer in the Huguenot army, commanded at first by the Prince of Condé, and afterwards by Coligni. Returning to England in 1576, he had soon been despatched to Holland with the embassage of Sir John Norris. In 1578 he came home, and took part in Gilbert's expedition to Newfoundland, and two years later, in company with the poet Spenser, he had gone to Ireland in the service of Lord Grey of Wilton. By that time he must have formed the acquaintance of Sidney. Soon afterwards, coming back from Ireland, he had suddenly risen to high place as a courtier. As one evidence of the royal esteem, he had obtained, in March of this year, 1584, at least nine months later than Sidney's similar grant, permission to explore and colonize a portion of America. But he was richer than Sidney, and therefore his charter was hardly a month old before two vessels were sent out to investigate the coast, and in his name to take possession of the prescribed district. It was upon the report of this expedition that the Bill to which I have referred, was brought before Parliament.

On the 21st of December, the House was adjourned for the Christmas holidays, and it did not meet again until the 4th of February. On the 5th a Bill concerning the maintenance of Rochester Bridge was referred to a Committee, of which Sidney was a member,* and on the

* D'Ewes, p. 346.

18th of the next month he was similarly employed in discussing two other small matters, the one concerning the preservation of woods in Kent, the other relating to the privileges of curriers.* But in the six weeks which were between these minor employments, he had to take part in the two principal subjects of the session.

On the 18th of February he was appointed, in company with Fulke Greville, and several others, to confer with the Lords respecting a bill about Jesuits.† The Upper House was far from sympathizing with the Puritan temper of the Commons. This Puritan temper, however, prevailed so far as to make it law that all Jesuits and Popish priests must quit the kingdom within forty days; all who stayed longer than that period, or who afterwards came back, being held guilty of treason; all who harboured or relieved them being accounted felons; and all now studying in foreign seminaries, and failing to return within six months, and at once to make humble submission, being adjudged traitors.‡ These measures were certainly bigoted and stringent enough; yet some excuse for them may be found in the many treacherous schemes now working in the minds of extreme Catholics, and showing themselves in conspiracies like that led by Babington.

Such strong law-making was quite to the Queen's taste: but she was displeased with the Commons, because they petitioned the other House to use influence

* D'Ewes, p. 370. † Ibid., p. 352.

‡ 27 Eliz. cap. i.

for restraining the persecuting spirit lately shown by Archbishop Whitgift. Whitgift's predecessor, Grindal, by his kind dealing towards nonconformists, had won the esteem not only of all Puritans, but also of such liberal thinkers as Spenser and Sidney. The new Archbishop chosen by the Queen mainly on account of his greater severity, was liked by few else. He procured the appointment of the famous High Commission Court, with jurisdiction over the whole kingdom; with power to inquire, openly or secretly, into all offences, contempts, and misdemeanors done against the ecclesiastical statutes; to estimate the wickedness of all heretical opinions, seditious books, contemptuous speeches, and the like; to punish all who absented themselves from church, all who refused to sign the Thirty-nine Articles, and so forth. It was against this Court that the Commons indirectly aimed by a petition in which they prayed for various modifications of the High Commissioners' power, and a lessening of the overbearing authority of the bishops.

When the Queen prorogued Parliament on Monday, the 29th of March, she thanked the Commons for their attachment to her—shown, among other things, in their granting her an entire subsidy and two fifteenths and tenths,—but, at the same time, reprimanded them for their insubordinate temper concerning matters of religion. Whoever found fault with the Church, she said, threw slander upon her, the rule of it being delegated to her by Heaven, and the suppression of errors being her sole prerogative. She had studied philosophy, she added, and few who were not professed followers of

science had read or reflected more than she had : she could see through the presumption of these new canvassers of Scripture who were plentifully rising up and starting fresh views, and she would no longer tolerate such licentiousness. She intended to guide her people in the just mean between the corruptions of Rome and the errors of those modern sectaries who, professing to obey God, were disobedient to the regal authority, and, under the pretence of preaching His word, dared to exercise their private judgments and condemn the conduct of their Sovereign.*

This was the last of Sir Philip Sidney's parliamentary experience, no further meeting being held during his lifetime. If, as I imagine, he had sided with the reforming portion of the Commons, he did not on that account lose favour with Queen Elizabeth. He continued at Court, and in this final year of his English career we see him taking in her counsels a far more prominent place than ever before. There are fewer records of his proceedings than we could wish, but almost every record gives separate indication of his conduct and throws fresh light upon his character. Everything interested him, and this year was very full of serious events.

During the month following the prorogation of Parliament he must have been much in company with his friend Walter Raleigh, now busy in organizing his new American colony, to be named Virginia, as the Virgin Queen, thereby paying a high compliment, had herself decreed. Seven ships, containing about a hundred and

* D'Ewes.

fifty men, were to go out, having for general Sir Richard Greenfield, Raleigh's cousin, and for civil governor Mr. Ralph Lane, Sidney's and Walsingham's favourite. Lane was now about fifty-five years old. Belonging to a venerable Buckinghamshire family, and himself second cousin to Queen Catherine Parr, he had first gained the good opinion of Leicester and Burghley in 1569, by his brave soldiership against the rebel army of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland. After that he was a humble courtier, holding employment under the Queen as an equerry of Leicester's Band, and doing any work that was given to him; sometimes going down to the coast to capture pirates, sometimes tilting at Whitehall, sometimes acting as a gentleman groom to her Majesty upon her progresses. No profit seems to have come to him from all this diligent service. Often he had made suit for employment or other recompense, but with no result; "having," as he said in July, 1583, "served her Majesty these twenty years, dispensed, as hath been often showed, twelve hundred pounds, spent my patrimony, bruised my limbs, and yet, nevertheless, at this day not worth one groat by her Majesty's gift towards a living." * It was probably at Walsingham's or Sidney's intercession that the Queen appointed him to be first governor of the first English colony in America. The fleet sailed from Plymouth on the 9th of April, 1585. Though planned, as it appears, altogether by Raleigh, its movements were watched with equal interest by Sidney. Already he was dreaming, perhaps doing

* *Archæologia Americana*, vol. iv. pp. 317—328.

much more than dreaming, about the fitness of going out on his own account upon a New World expedition.

But he was needed in England. We have seen how, a couple of years earlier, he had written two letters to Lord Burghley, asking to be appointed Master of the Ordnance jointly with his uncle the Earl of Warwick. The request was granted on the 21st of July in the present year. On that day the Earl surrendered the patent which he had held for a quarter of a century and another was issued, bestowing the office upon him and Sir Philip Sidney, to be possessed by them jointly during life and, in the event of one dying, by the survivor.* For a long time before this date, however, Sidney appears to have acted as a deputy to his uncle. In May, he wrote to the Lord Treasurer a very curious letter, indicating not only his own growing importance

* The original document is as follows :

"Regina, etc., cum nos per literas nostras patentes, etc. Datum apud Westmonasterium xii-mo. die Aprilis anno regni nostri secundo, etc., dederimus et concesserimus dilecto consanguineo et fideli conciliario nostro Ambrosio comiti Warwici, per nomen Ambrosii Dudley militis, domini Dudley officium magistri omnium et omnimodi Ordinationum variarum, etc. Quas quidem literas patentes idem comes nobis in cancellariam nostram sursum reddidit, cancellandum ea tamen intentione, ut nos alias literas nostras patentes de officio prædicto et cæteris prœmissis superius expressis eidem comiti et dilecto et fideli nostro Philippo Sidney militi in formâ sequenti facere dignaremur. Sciatis igitur quod nos, etc., dedimus et concessimus, etc., dilecto fideli consanguineo nostro Ambrosio comiti Warwici et præfato Philippo Sidney militi, et eorum diutius vivendum officium magistri omnium et omnimodi ordinationum nostrarum, etc., ac præfatum comitem et Philippum Sidney et eorum alterum diutius vivendum magistrum nostrarum, etc., facimus, etc. Datum xxi-mo. die Julii ; xi-mo. pars patentis, anno 27 Eliz."—State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, James I.*, vol. iii., No. 62.

in the State and the sort of service he was just now doing for his country, but also the uncertain standing which even Burghley, by far the most firm-footed of all Queen Elizabeth's servants, sometimes held in the royal favour. It is not altogether strange that—even in this time of great European excitement, and when England was on the point of beginning a struggle, whose issue was a matter of great dread to even the most ardent thinkers—the storehouse of munition should be empty; for parsimony was a prominent feature in the character of Elizabeth; and it is possible that the Lord Treasurer, aiming to be like his mistress, to please her by his economy, may here have surpassed her in her own art. But it is certainly curious that the same great statesman who not eighteen years ago had written about "the darling Philip," and had praised him for his boyish virtues, should now find the young man taking almost foremost place as the champion of a line of policy opposite to his own and much more conducive to the honour of England.

On the 15th of May, in reply to a letter which he had received from Lord Burghley, and in which he was blamed for having too plainly represented to the Queen the destitute condition of her ordnance stores, Sidney thus wrote :—

"Right Honourable my very good Lord,

"I will not fail on Monday morning to wait at the Tower for the performance of her Majesty's commandments therein. Your Lordship in the postscript writes of her Majesty's being informed of great wants and faults in the office; wherewith her Majesty seemeth to charge your Lordship for lack of reformation, more than your Lord-

ship doth deserve. For my part, I have ever so conceived. But, because your Lordship writes it particularly to me, who of that office am driven to have sometimes speech with her Majesty, I desire, for truth's sake, especially to satisfy your Lordship, if perhaps your Lordship conceive any doubt of me therein. Indeed, having in my speech not once gone beyond these limits, to acknowledge, as in honesty I could not deny, the present poverty of her Majesty's store, and therein to excuse my Lord of Warwick, as in conscience I might and in duty ought to do, without further aggravating anything against any man living; for I cannot, not having been acquainted with the proceedings. And so, hoping your Lordship will so conceive of it, I humbly take my leave. At Court. This 15th of May.

"Your Lordship's humbly at commandment,

"PH. SIDNEY."

To this manly letter was added a postscript:—

"Her Majesty did not once name your Lordship, nor any belonging to the office, but Sir William Pelham, who, her Majesty said, did lay all the fault upon my Lord of Warwick's deputy, whereupon I only answered that the money neither my lord nor any of his had ever dealt with." *

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* State Paper Office, MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clxxviii. No. 54. The following short letter, written a day later than the one quoted above, having, like it, never been printed before, is worth copying in illustration of Sir Philip Sidney's kindly disposition. It is from the same MS. volume, No. 58.

"To the Right Honourable Sir Francis Walsingham, Principal Secretary, etc.

"RIGHT HONOURABLE,

"I do humbly beseech you that it will please you to recommend Mr. John Peyty's bill to Mr. Nikasius in some earnest manner, because it imports him much, and he is one whom from my childhood I have had great cause to love. The matter, as it seems, requires some speed, and therefore I am the bolder to trouble you herein, which I conclude for my hearty prayers for your long and happy life. At Court. This 16th of May, 1585.

"Your humble son,

"PH. SIDNEY."

From this letter we see how zealously Sidney was keeping watch over the home defences. He was also seeking every other possible way of helping on the one great business he had at heart. It was that all might be in readiness for any possible resistance against the Spanish power, that he made close inspection of the Tower long before he was appointed Master of the Ordnance. It was mainly in hope of adding strength to the same cause that he took part in the complicated affairs of Scotland.*

Scottish politics were in a very hopeless state. For now nearly eighteen years the luckless Mary Stuart had been, in one way or another, a captive to Queen Elizabeth, and her lucky, but thoroughly despicable son had been reigning as King James the Sixth. It is hard to say whether the mother or the son gave more trouble to English statesmen, and stirred up more danger to the English welfare. The discovery of Babington's conspiracy, ugliest and most perilous of a long series of plots, was proving to all fair judges that, in the present condition of Europe, Mary's execution, hard dealing though it might be, was the only safe proceeding. Unfortunately there was no good excuse for executing James, hereafter to be King of England. All that could be done, therefore, was to keep close watch upon him, and use the best means of hindering him from making mischief. Lately the main source of perplexity had been his partiality for the Earls of Arran and Lennox, and the consequent rebellious feeling

* State Paper Office MSS., *Domestic Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. clxxviii. No. 58.

of the Earl of Gowry, the Master of Glamis, and many others. In 1582, the Gowry party had seized the young King's person at Ruthven, and imprisoned or banished the leaders of the opposite faction. In 1583, after a year's feigned liking of his position, James had made his escape, released Arran and the others, and expelled most of his sometime guardians. Matters being in this state, Walsingham had been sent, in September, 1583, to use all his influence with the King, and to report fully to Elizabeth. His report was to the effect that her Majesty was right in her estimate of James's character; he was ready, at any moment, to requite kindness with ingratitude: everywhere he was misliked for his dissimulation and treachery: and now the captive Queen, his mother, ever the chief mover of disaffection, had half persuaded him to change his religion, promising him the support of a large party in England, and the willing aid of Spain.* Yet Walsingham's frequent arguments in some degree prevailed, or, at any rate, had the show of prevailing. The Earl of Arran, moreover, by his overbearing insolence, brought himself into disfavour, and in losing him a certain amount of good seems to have been gained.

Thus stood matters at the period of Sidney's life which we are now tracing out. His old friend Edward Wotton, who ten years before had studied with him at Vienna, was now ambassador in Scotland, and the

* State Paper Office MSS., *Scottish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxxiii. No. 58.

Master of Gray, a new friend, whose acquaintance Sidney made when in the previous October he came on an embassage to London, was now gaining an influence for the most part honestly meant and used. Through them, it appears, Sidney procured trustworthy information as to the movements of the northern King, and some things that he heard stirred him to prompt exertion. I cannot see that he ever concerned himself much about the Scottish matters of most interest for the generality of Englishmen. Respecting Mary's conspiracies, and James's plots for his succession to the rule of England upon Elizabeth's demise, he appears to have suggested nothing. But as soon as there was revival of the old fear that Scotland would be leagued with Spain, he was moved to action. On this point we have not much information ; but it seems that Sidney, rightly discovering one of King James's weaknesses, took the lead in procuring from Queen Elizabeth the promise of a pension to be given him if he would hold aloof from Philip the Second's movements. On the 23rd of May we find Walsingham writing by his son-in-law's advice to urge upon Wotton the importance of thus working upon James : "but," said the prudent Secretary, "you must be cautious how you broach the subject, lest the smallness of the sum allowed by her Majesty do more harm than good." *

Out of this project of Sidney's nothing save a collection of useless correspondence resulted. Seeing

* State Paper Office MSS., *Scottish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxxvii. No. 44.

how matters stood at the Scottish Court, and how paltry was the pension offered, Wotton, after taking counsel with the Master of Gray and others, probably did well in never tendering it to King James. There were other and fitter ways of propitiating that monarch's little mind. In June the Queen sent him a present of horses, most beautiful in shape and goodly in bearing; and we are told that he mounted and managed them to the great contentment both of himself and of his courtiers.*

In various ways, which we are not now able to make plain, Sidney appears to have taken part in Scottish politics. His friend the Master of Gray, who seldom wrote to London without sending some affectionate message to Sir Philip,† was foremost in his efforts to dissuade the King from joining in the Spanish league.‡ In a letter to a London correspondent, dated the 31st of July, he said, "I commend me heartily unto you, and will you to do the same to all my friends in my name, but chiefly to Sir Philip Sidney. Pray him that he do according to the postscript of my letter; for in that stands my weal, and otherwise my overthrow."§ I have been unable to find the postscript referred to, or to identify this particular matter in which Sidney's influence was reckoned of such great value. But the allusion is enough for my purpose in attempting to

* State Paper Office MSS. *Scottish Correspondence, Elizabeth*, vol. xxxvii. No. 63.

† Ibid., vol. xxxvii. Nos. 49, 77, etc.

‡ Ibid., vol. xxxvii. No. 82.

§ Ibid., vol. xxxvii. No. 108.

gather up some links in the chain of evidence as to the importance of his political connections at this period of his life.

Of Scottish affairs, however, very uninteresting, and only instructive inasmuch as they were vile, I have no wish to say more than can be helped, and I fancy that Sidney avoided the ground as much as he could with honour. Business far more to his liking was provided on the continent, and was being brought from the continent to England. In these summer months the concerns of the Netherlands were specially brought under his attention. On the 26th of June, several of the leading men in the Low Countries came to London in deputation to Queen Elizabeth.

For some time past everything had been tending to make the Flemish struggle more important than it had ever been before. We have seen what mischief followed upon the murder of William of Orange. The main current of patriotism was by no means weakened; it rather gained strength and made more splendid show by reason of the fresh trouble which had to be overpassed,—like the river which hard rocks convert into a cataract; but many little streams of selfishness and narrow-minded policy were parted off, and thereby there seemed to be diminishment of power. Several towns made surrender of their liberty to the Duke of Parma; many allies transferred their friendship to Parma's master, Philip the Second of Spain. The greatest benefit, though it seemed to be the most terrible loss, was the severance of France from the Low Countries' cause. Through the later years of the Duke

of Anjou's life, the favourite wish of his mother, Catherine de' Medici, had been that he should become king, or duke, or absolute master with some title or other, of the Netherlands. For this she had seemed to break through her natural affinity for the crooked policy of Spain, and had made pretence of sympathy with the brave battling of the States for freedom. But, Anjou being dead, she had no further motive for dissimulation. Hence,—to pass over many intermediate proceedings and relate only the result of the whole,—when, in the spring of 1585, the Low Country deputies presented themselves at Paris, and sought help against Spain from her and her obedient son, King Henry the Third, they received very scurvy treatment, and soon saw, as it was intended they should see, that no help would be given them. Therefore the States looked to England for assistance.

England had all along been the proper quarter from which assistance was to be sought, and for some years Queen Elizabeth had given, in a secret way, both good word and good gold for the furtherance of the cause. Sidney and Walsingham, and all the noblest politicians in our land, echoed the thought of all the worthiest Protestants of the continent, that help ought to come from England; all hoped, till they were weary of hoping, that it would be suitably afforded. Perhaps Queen Elizabeth and her counsellors were right in being so tardy in the matter. They had good reason for dreading war with Spain, and, so long as there was hope of the cause being otherwise maintained, they may have done well in holding back from a struggle

about which very much was to be feared and very little to be hoped. If we give hearty praise to such true-hearted lovers of liberty as Sir Philip Sidney and many others, unfettered by the responsibilities of office, we are bound to withhold blame from Queen Elizabeth and Lord Burghley for pausing long before they publicly aided the cause of freedom which they loved no less than did Sidney's party, although they more clearly saw its perils. It is enough that, when the necessity of action arose, they honestly undertook the work, notwithstanding its attendant risk. As soon as it was certain that France would not help the States, the Queen and her ministers let it be known that help might be claimed from England.

Yet, even when that stage had been reached, there were many hindrances, real and imaginary, to be overcome. Sir Francis Walsingham—who held the anomalous position of a Principal Secretary of State, over whom the Queen and the Lord Treasurer often acted unknown to him and in ways of which he quite disapproved—was heartily dissatisfied by the slow windings of diplomacy in reaching an end to which the direct road was very simple; and Sir Philip Sidney seems to have been much more dissatisfied. He had heard so many promises which were unfulfilled, and had seen so many strong beginnings which dwindled away into nothing, that he trusted very little, I infer, to the likelihood of good resulting from this new deputation which, as we have seen, reached London on the 26th of June, 1585.

But, as it happened, there was real ground for hope at last. The deputies had audience of the Queen, at

Greenwich, on Tuesday, the 29th of the month; and then a very eloquent and memorable speech was delivered by Menin, their leader. On behalf of the United Provinces, he heartily thanked her Majesty for the past affection and the great favour which she had always shown to them, but which lately had been most of all apparent. Then at some length he went on to say that, considering how they were now suffering more painfully at the hands of the King of Spain than even the poor Indians whom he was causing to be cruelly persecuted in the New World; considering how all the Protestants of the States looked to her, the Protectress and Defendress of the Faith, for help in expelling this manifest tyranny and servitude which Philip was trying to introduce, and for strength to preserve those liberties, rights, and privileges, against which so many leagues were being formed and so many rumours, subtilties, and base ambushes were being designed; they now offered to her Majesty the sovereignty of the Provinces, if, by aiding them, she would do a work right royal and most magnificent, acceptable to God, profitable to all Christendom, and worthy of immortal commendation.*

Elizabeth at once declined the sovereignty; but she promised to give prompt and powerful help to the cause by sending men and money into the Netherlands. In the following weeks frequent interviews were had with the Queen or with her ministers; the result being a treaty by which it was stipulated that as soon as possible she would send over an army of five thousand foot

* Nichols, *Royal Progresses*, vol. ii. pp. 437—440.

and a thousand horse, equipping and paying them out of the English exchequer; that the general whom she selected and two others to be specified should take rank in the Council of the States; that neither party should make peace without the other's consent; and that at the close of the war all its expenses should be paid by the Netherlands, the Queen holding the towns of Flushing and Brill, with the castle of Rammekins, as a security for the liquidation of the debt.

This treaty is very memorable. It provided Sir Philip Sidney with the last and by far the most important employment ever conferred upon him by the Crown. From the very beginning he seems to have been talked of as the fittest man to assume the government of Flushing, and thus to occupy, if not the most showy, nearly the most important place in the whole undertaking. Yet it appears that he did not enter very warmly into the project. He who had for so many long years been urging the rescue of the Netherlands, and who now was more eloquent than ever in protesting against the overgrown and tyrannical power of Spain, appeared to be almost callous when an opportunity of furthering his plans occurred.*

But if thoughtless lookers-on accused him of inconsistency, wise men saw through the mystery, and understood how brave and manly was his proceeding. We have already noticed how he had lately been changing his judgment as to the fittest place for battling with

* Fulke Greville, *Life*, pp. 90, 91. State Paper Office MSS., *Foreign Correspondence, Holland*, 13th Sept. 1585.

Philip of Spain. That much hard, deadly battling there must be, he knew better, perhaps, and announced more eloquently, than any other man living in his day. But where should the strife be carried on? For years he had thought, with every one else, that the Netherlands, the scene of the present contest, was the best ground on which to continue the fight. But now, looking at the strength of men and of munitions which the King of Spain had heaped up in that portion of his dominions, and feeling that it would be especially difficult to defeat him there, and that, even if the defeat were effected, it would only be the lopping off of an arm from a huge monster, whose physical energy could quickly replace the loss, he urged that the battle-field should be shifted. He began to think with distrust of his own former projects for boldly attacking Spain, either by aiding the patriotic party in Portugal, or by seizing Seville, Cadiz, or any other Spanish fort. He felt that they were far too venturesome for the State to undertake. Besides that, he was losing all confidence in the administrators of his country. "He found," wrote his friend Fulke Greville, in one very notable sentence, "he found greatness of worth and place counterpoised by the arts of power and favour; the stirring spirits sent abroad as fuel to keep the flame far off, and the effeminate made judges of danger which they feared, and honour which they understood not." * He knew that Queen Elizabeth and Lord Burghley were honest in their wish to help the cause of European liberty; "yet," said the

* Fulke Greville, pp. 91, 92.

same trustworthy authority, "he perceived her governors to sit at home in their soft chairs, playing fast and loose with those that ventured their lives abroad."*

Therefore, we are further told, upon a due consideration of the whole condition of affairs, seeing that his favourite projects, either of a European league or of an independent attack upon Spain itself, would require greater resolution, union, and expense than the natural diffidence and apathy of the reigning sovereign could well endure,—and besides, the freedom of choice being taken away, or at least obstructed by the fatal mists of ignorance or the fallacious counsels of ministers, he considered that the only creditable means left was to trust to his own hand, and to assail the King of Spain by invasion or incursion in the West Indies.†

This very memorable scheme was not altogether of Sidney's own invention. It was doubtless suggested by the occasional attacks upon Spanish ports and vessels with which Drake, five years before, had relieved the monotony of his voyage round the world. There were others even now propounding and putting into force similar suggestions, in which the rough manly spirit of the age spoke out very bravely. England under Elizabeth was in much more of a school-boy condition than our own generation, three centuries older and more sedate, though perhaps not wiser or more profound, is at all disposed, or at all bound, to rival. But the thought was wholesome and proper in Sidney's

* Fulke Greville, p. 92.

† Ibid., pp. 123, 124.

day; and during the first three quarters of this year, 1585, amid his parliamentary and courtly duties, amid the claims of his own home, and the responsibilities of his office of Master of the Ordnance, while he was threading the mazes of Scottish politics, and during all the wearisome delays of Low Country diplomacy, he was giving it greater clearness and completeness than it had ever had before; he was raising it from any semblance of piracy to the character of a high and noble duty. The plan, rooted in his mind, grew to more and more glorious shape. Not only, he perceived, would it add indirectly, but very materially, to the power and dignity of England, and room be afforded for the exercise of those large military powers which, albeit yet tried only in holiday tournament, he knew quite well to be within him. Not only would a great service to humanity be done by his helping the poor natives now struggling under the grossest of all tyrannies. He felt that a holy vengeance would thus be executed upon the doers of those hypocritical cruelties which, under cover of converting souls to God, sent millions of men better than themselves they cared not whither; upon men who instead of spreading the Christian religion by their own good life, committed such horrible inhumanities as gave to those who knew nothing about God, but ought to be taught to love Him, an occasion of scorn against our sacred things, and abhorrence to the devilish character of what seemed so tyrannical a Deity.*

Herein, it will be seen, Sidney gathered up the strag-

* Fulke Greville, pp. 130, 131.

gling plans of his friends; Drake, who aimed simply to damage Spanish power and property, and Raleigh, who endeavoured to plant a simple colony. While they had been acting, his project had gradually been assuming large and suitable form in his mind. There was evidence of it when he procured, in 1583, a charter for the finding and possessing of new lands; and though he had given away the charter and postponed all idea of direct colonization, he had lost none of his zeal about American voyaging. The subject was much in his mind at the beginning of this year, 1585, and he talked freely about it to Ralph Lane, the governor whom Raleigh sent out with his expedition in April. Lane had not been long in Virginia before he wrote to Sidney about some matters, as he said, worthy of his participation. "We have," he wrote, "by our dwelling upon the islands of St. John and Hispaniola, for the space of five weeks, so discovered the forces thereof, with the infinite riches of the same, as that I find it an attempt most honourable, feasible, and profitable, and only fit for yourself to be chief commander in. This entry would so gall the King of Spain, as it would divert his forces that he troubleth your part of Christendom with, into these parts, where he cannot greatly annoy us with them. And how greatly a small force would garboil him here, when two of his most richest and strongest islands took such alarms of us, not only landing, but dwelling upon them, with only a hundred and twenty men! I refer it to your judgment. Finding, by mine own view, his forces at land to be so mean, and his terror made so great amongst those in England,

considering that the reputation thereof doth altogether grow from the mines of his treasure, and the same in places which we see here are so easy both to be taken and kept by any small force sent by her Majesty, I could not but write these ill-fashioned lines unto you, and to exhort you, my noble general, by occasion, not to refuse the good opportunity of such a service to the Church of Christ, of great relief from many calamities that this treasure in the Spaniard's hands doth inflict unto the members thereof—very honourable and profitable for her Majesty and our country, and most commendable and fit for yourself to be the enterprizer of."*

This letter, written on the 12th of August, could not have reached England before circumstances had led Sidney to abandon, for a time, and as it proved for ever, his New World projects. Its tempting words, when read, must have made the sacrifice seem greater. In the previous months he had been making vigorous preparations for aiding the Low Country struggle in this new way. Besides giving his own wise thoughts, and all the money that he could save from his own scanty resources, we are told that he induced thirty gentlemen, of noble birth and estate, to provide a hundred pounds a-piece for fitting out a fleet powerful enough to act worthily in opposition to Spain.† The circumstances of this remarkable measure are very incompletely recorded. The fleet, it is said, was to act in conjunction with that of the Low Countries ; but, as there was no naval warfare just then

* State Paper Office MSS., *Colonial Correspondence*, vol. i. No. 5.

† Fulke Greville, p. 132.

being carried on in European Seas, it must have found some other scene of operation. I have no doubt that in its organization was the beginning of Sir Francis Drake's famous expedition to the West Indies. We know that Sidney did help Drake very largely; indeed there is fair inference that his entreaties and arguments were the main reason for Sir Francis's undertaking a new voyage after five years of courtly indolence. Sidney provided him with men as well as money, using all his eloquence to gather together a suitable body of adventurers. "To martial men," we learn, "he opened wide the door of sea and land, for fame and conquest: to the nobly ambitious, the far stage of America to win honour in: to the religious divines, besides a new apostolical calling of the lost heathen to the Christian faith, a large field of reducing poor Christians, misled by the idolatry of Rome, to their primitive Mother Church: to the ingeniously industrious, variety of natural riches for new mysteries and manufactures to work upon: to the merchants, with a simple people, a fertile and unexhausted earth: to the fortune-bound, liberty: to the curious, a fruitful womb of invention. Generally, the word *gold* was an attractive adamant to make men venture that which they have, in hope to grow rich by that which they have not."*

In this cause we may picture Sidney as working largely through the summer of 1585. His plan, secretly held, was that, besides all the other help afforded by him, he should himself take part, and a prominent

* Fulke Greville, p. 133.

part, as became him, in the expedition. As soon as they left England, he and Drake were to possess equal authority; but, while the thing was in preparation, Drake was to have the name of it all. There was good reason for this secrecy. Now that his service to the State was held really valuable, Sidney could not have obtained the sanction of the Queen or the Government to so distant and hazardous an employment. It was also supposed, he alleged, that all his training having been in the strict art of fighting, not in the management of a ship, he would be unable to make way through so many and such dangerous seas. Besides, he added, in a phrase to be remembered as a noble indication of his character, *he thought it always best to do a great thing first and let it be talked about afterwards*, when neither the fears nor the gossip of friends could hinder him, and when the envy of enemies could not harm him.* Associated with Sidney, and in the same privacy, were Fulke Greville,—whose narrative of the affair is the pleasantest portion of all his extant writings,—and other friends whose influence, Drake thought, would give weight or fashion, and consequently add dignity, to the voyage.

As we saw in the quoted summary of Sidney's arguments in favour of the expedition, he said nothing about attacking Philip of Spain. This, also, was with especial care kept secret, so that the King, not knowing the precise object of these preparations, might not know what part of his dominions he ought to keep in the best state of defence.†

* Fulke Greville, pp. 82, 83. † Ibid., p. 84.

Sidney's share in the preparations was interrupted by the coming over of the deputies from the Netherlands, and by the issue of their visit. But the negotiations did not progress very rapidly, and it appears that he, knowing well how dilatory and often how entirely fruitless was the diplomacy of his day, had not much faith in the result. I cannot see that he took as much share as might have been expected in the many interviews and discussions. It is not strange that he should have been disheartened. Every day brought intelligence which ought to have led to prompt action; the greatest and most dismal, though by no means the only, piece of evil news being about the capitulation of Antwerp to the Duke of Parma on the 30th of July. But there were yet months of delay. Fault was on both sides; and with the Netherlanders more than with the English. If Elizabeth was to blame for an unwise parsimony in planning how she should at the same time give help to her oppressed neighbours and strike a successful blow at her own clandestine enemy, there was far greater error on the part of the people who allowed a falsely-called economy and the very opposite of prudence to guide them into the spending of ten times as much money as they wished to save, while it also involved immense loss of both credit and life. "'Tis a manner of proceeding not to be allowed of," wrote Walsingham, the one prominent statesman of whom Englishmen, looking back at these times, can think with unchecked satisfaction, "considering that Her Majesty seeketh no interest in that country, as Monsieur and the French King did,

but only their good and benefit, without regard had of the expenses of her treasure and the hazard of her subjects' lives; besides throwing herself into a present war for their sakes with the greatest prince and potentate in Europe. But seeing the good of those countries resteth in the hands of merchants and advocates, the one regarding profit, the other standing upon vantage of units, there is no better trust to be looked to for them." *

Those sentences were written to William Davison, at that time Ambassador in the Low Countries, after more than three weary months of diplomatic hesitation. We can understand how Sidney, long before, should have grown angry and hopeless, and how, even when the Queen promised that he should be appointed Governor of Flushing, his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, being Commander of the Forces and Lord-Lieutenant for Her Majesty, he could not look very cheerfully upon the prospects, or anticipate much good either to himself or to the cause which he had at heart. Yet even such poor hopes as he could hold were, for a time, to be rudely shaken, and he was to be driven by the royal caprice to a very unexpected line of action. Walsingham, not yet knowing so much of the secret projects of his son-in-law as we are able to spell out, wrote to Davison on the 13th of September, saying, "Sir Philip hath taken a very hard resolution to accompany Sir Francis Drake in his voyage, moved

* MS. in the State Paper Office, cited by Motley, *United Netherlands*, vol. i. p. 337.

thereto for that he saw Her Majesty was disposed to commit the charge of Flushing unto some other ; which he reputed would fall out greatly to his disgrace, to see another preferred before him, both for birth and judgment inferior unto him. The despair thereof and the disgrace that he doubted he should receive have carried him into a different course." *

The history of this proceeding is in every way curious. The new phase of Low Country politics having called away Sidney's attention from the West Indian scheme, Drake appears to have made arrangements for going alone, and undoubtedly this change of plan much pleased him. His policy throughout the transaction was not altogether creditable. He was very willing to receive all Sir Philip's valuable aid in suitably fitting out the expedition. But he wished the aid to end there, not at all caring to have a companion who, being far superior to him in family dignity and in native grace, should be, as soon as they put to sea, his equal in official rank. He could not, however, help acceding, in word at least, to Sidney's proposal that they should now revert to the discarded agreement. So he went down to Plymouth to make ready for their speedy departure, promising that as soon as the arrangements were completed, he would send secret word to London.

The summons reached Sidney sooner than he expected ; but fortunately, together with Drake's private

* State Paper Office, MSS., *Foreign Correspondence, Holland*, vol. xxvi. Sept. 1585.

letter, came public news that Don Antonio, the weak claimant of the Crown of Portugal, of whom we have seen a little, was about to land at Plymouth. Sidney therefore asked and obtained permission to go and conduct the would-be King to London; under that veil, we are told by Fulke Greville, who accompanied him, leaving the Court without suspicion, and overshooting his father-in-law with his own bow.* At Plymouth he was greeted with much show of friendship, and feasted with great pomp by Drake. Greville, however, has recorded that he saw more in the Admiral's countenance than Sidney had leisure for. It was apparent to him that the Admiral did not like their coming; but when he said so to Sidney, "that ingenuous spirit," as his words are, "though apt to give me credit, yet not apt to discredit others, made him instruct his own, and labour to change and qualify my, judgment."† Yet after several days' waiting, when he saw that the ships were neither ready nor likely to be ready for some while longer, and when he could not help observing "some sparks of false fire breaking out from his yoke-fellow daily," Sidney was forced to entertain all Greville's suspicions, to believe, in fact, that Drake had purposely called him down too soon, in order that his absence might be noticed at Court, and his project might be discovered and hindered by the Queen.

Thus they waited for many days. If Drake, however, was slow in going, Don Antonio was equally slow

* Fulke Greville, p. 85.

† Ibid., p. 86.

in coming ; so that Sidney had excuse for his delay. Yet Drake was not in this way to be baffled. From some one at Plymouth—Sidney and Greville never doubted from whom—a message was sent stealthily to Court, representing the real state of the case. In return a prompt order was despatched by the Queen, to the effect that the two from Court were to be stayed : if they refused, the whole fleet was to be kept back : on no account was Drake to sail with them on board. Now it was Sidney's turn to scheme. Some good friend at Court sent him early notice of the order being on its way, and he had time to dress up as sailors two soldiers whom he could trust, and to pack them off to meet the courier, get into conversation with him, after the manner of old mariners, and purloin the letter. News of the loss, however, came to Her Majesty's ears before Sidney had time to leave Plymouth. A more imperious mandate was at once prepared, and this time care was taken to have it properly conveyed. It was delivered, we learn, into Sir Philip's own hands by a peer of the realm. It carried with it, "in the one hand grace, in the other thunder." The thunder was a threat that, if he quitted the Queen and her Court in this way, he should never return. The grace was a pledge that he should have employment under his uncle now going into the Low Countries. Against this, says our authority, he would gladly have demurred : but "the confluence of reason, transcendency of power, and fear of staying the whole fleet" made him immediately give way.*

* Fulke Greville, pp. 87, 88.

On the 14th of September, Admiral Sir Francis Drake, having now no reason for more delay, but every reason for making haste, set sail from Plymouth at the head of twenty vessels, containing two thousand three hundred soldiers and seamen; — one of the most splendid armaments that had ever yet ridden out of an English harbour, and mainly, we must suppose, collected through Sir Philip Sidney's great influence perseveringly used. It is no wonder that he yearned to accompany it. For Lieutenant-General, Drake had the famous Christopher Carlyle, the old comrade of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and a kinsman of Walsingham's; for Vice-Admiral, the still more famous Martin Frobisher; and for Rear-Admiral, Francis Knollys, uncle of Lady Rich, and brother-in-law to the Earl of Leicester. The story of the splendid failure of this expedition deserves a little volume to itself. After visiting in warlike manner Saint Jago, Saint Domingo, Carthagena, Florida, and some other parts, Drake, with many glittering prizes to take the place of the seven hundred men who had been killed, came home by way of Virginia. There he found Ralph Lane and the other colonists, whom Raleigh had sent out a year before, in great trouble, and giving them some of the vacant space in his ships, he brought them home in June of 1586. Thus there was one ending, and a useless one, to both the New World projects about which Sidney had so largely interested himself. Had he, with greater administrative tact than Raleigh, and with more consistency of character than Drake, attempted either work, the issue might have been very different, and he

might have lived to make a broader, though it could hardly have been a deeper, mark upon the history of his country. But this was not to be.

With the Queen's second promise of employment in the Netherlands to comfort him, he spent two more months in England. Perhaps it was at some period in the course of these two months, or it may have been rather earlier in the year, that his daughter Elizabeth was born. Of this event, as well as of nearly everything else belonging to his domestic history, we have very scanty information. In the present instance, about all that we know is that Queen Elizabeth, willing to show favour to the courtier whom in her own strange neglectful way she really admired, acted as sponsor to the child who was named after her. The two quaint entries, in an account book of royal expenses, which attest this fact, are worth quoting in full. They are as follows :—

"*Item.*—Paid to Richard Brackenbury, one of the ordinary gentlemen ushers of her Majesty's chamber, to be by him distributed and given by way of her Majesty's reward to the nurse and midwife, at the christening of Sir Philip Sidney's daughter, to whom her Majesty was godmother, the sum of one hundred shillings.

"*Item.*—Paid to Richard Brackenbury, one of the ordinary gentlemen ushers of her Majesty's chamber, one groom of the chamber, and one groom of the wardrobe, for riding from the Court at Richmond to London, to make ready for her Majesty, against the christening of Sir Philip Sidney's daughter, by the space of four days, in the month of November, 1585, as appeared by a bill signed by the Lord Chamberlain, sixty-six shillings and eightpence.*

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* British Museum, *Harl. MSS.*, 1641.

CHAPTER XV.

WAR AND ITS ACCESSORIES.

1585—1586.

From his appointment to take part in the strife now waging in the Netherlands better work fell to Sidney than could have issued from his projected voyage with Drake. Before long he must himself have thought so. His opinion that Holland was not the best battle-ground between England and Spain may have been correct; but as, by a long series of earlier events, the scene of warfare had been clearly marked out, it was evident that there the strife must be continued. And certainly it was far better that the whole English nation should enter upon a public contest, than that private and half-piratical attacks should be made by individual adventurers.

The time for open war had fully come. Spain and France, the two friends of Rome, had been plotting for years; but, though one in purpose, their selfish ends had till now kept them at variance. Catherine de' Medici, whose strong bad intellect made her virtually the ruler of France, had set her heart upon making the Duke of Anjou master of the Netherlands, and therefore, while he lived, she had played with the Protestants, and professed herself their friend. His death, however,

caused a total change in her tactics. Removing most of the points of difference between her and Philip of Spain, it made an alliance with him expedient and almost necessary. Hence arose the Holy League on the one side, and on the other, the necessary union of all friends of political and religious liberty. In the spring of 1585 we find the Queen-Mother boldly proposing to King Philip that they should jointly invade England, and crush its heretical rule. King Philip, not less wicked but more prudent than the Queen-Mother, replied that there were heretics much nearer to both France and Spain, whom it was their plain duty to crush first.* The chief heretic, King Henry of Navarre, husband to Catherine's own daughter Margaret, was certainly in a perilous condition. "The storm has come at last," wrote Du Plessis Mornay, Henry's secretary, and Sidney's friend, on the 8th of July, in a letter pleasantly indicative of Sir Philip's continental fame. "Is it from our own apathy, or from others' treachery, or from both? I cannot say; but somehow it has fallen. The King has taken his resolution; may God give him strength enough for his trials. Do you also help him, according as he may need: let your zeal grow with his necessities. I know this will be sufficient for you. *Utinam, et rursum utinam.* Believe me at all times your servant, an admirer of your virtue, and very anxious for the growth of your reputation."†

The relative position of Catholics and Protestants being such, it was evident to every patriot and states-

* Motley, *United Netherlands*, vol. i. p. 107.

† *Mémoires de Du Plessis Mornay*, tome iii. p. 158.

man, to cautious Burghley and giddy Leicester, as much as to blunt, upright Walsingham, that England must join in the contest. Therefore, after much diplomacy and discussion, the treaty signed at Nonsuch, on the 10th of August, 1585, stipulated that Queen Elizabeth should provide five thousand foot soldiers, and one thousand horsemen, for aiding the war in the Netherlands, and that, as surety for the payment of all expenses and as suitable head-quarters for her troops, she should take temporary occupation of the towns of Flushing and Brill, and of the castle of Rammekins. Soon afterwards Her Majesty issued a noble proclamation. In it, having first defined the duty which princes owed to God, she spoke fully and eloquently about the ancient friendship which had been between the English and the Netherlanders, going back to the time when the two peoples, speaking Anglo-Saxon and Frisian, were as near in language to one another as were man and wife. Then she expatiated on the cruelty and tyranny of the Spaniards, shown not only to Protestants, but even to such brave Catholics as Count Egmont and his comrades. The Low Countries, she said, had become desolate through fire and sword, through famine and murder, all traceable to the ungodly policy of King Philip the Second of Spain. Often had she warned her brother of Spain with all sisterly and neighbourly words of honest reproach and earnest counsel; but no good had come therefrom. The evil and the danger had steadily grown, and now she was forced to take up the sword and let its arguments be tried. In entering upon this war, said Her Majesty in conclusion, she had only three

objects before her, and they were holy ones—the procurement of peace to all holders of the Reformed Faith, the restoration to the Netherlands of their political and time-honoured rights, and the safety of England.*

On the 7th of November, very soon after that famous utterance of the Queen's mind, a patent was granted at Westminster, appointing Sir Philip Sidney to be Governor of Flushing and of Rammekins ;† Sir Thomas Cecil, eldest son of Lord Burghley, and Sidney's senior by a dozen years, being nominated to the humbler post of Governor of Brill ; and the Earl of Leicester being commissioned as Commander of the Forces, and leader of the whole expedition. For private secretary Sidney chose Mr. William Temple,‡ student of King's College, Cambridge, a skilful wielder of the pen, and a warm champion, under the feigned name of Mildapettus, of Ramus, and his writings. In 1584 he had dedicated to Sir Philip his edition of the philosopher's two books of *Dialectics*. He had probably received much earlier kindness from the master with whom he now quitted England.

There was leave-taking of Queen and Court, of wife and parents, and on Tuesday, the 16th of November, Sidney departed for the Netherlands. § If joy and grief were mingled at quitting the society of those who loved him, to begin, as it seemed, a splendid military career, there was unmixed joy in the hearts of many on

* Motley, vol. i. pp. 356, 357.
† Zouch, p. 237.
‡ Ibid., p. 239.
§ *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C. viii. fol. 211.

the Continent, who had been long expecting him. On the 12th of October Count Maurice of Nassau, eldest son of Prince William of Orange, had written to Davison, the English ambassador, saying how he would hold the noble Sir Philip Sidney as a brother and an honoured companion in arms.* On the 11th of this November, Davison himself had written to some unknown friend, complaining of the troublesome work that fell to him, and his desire to be rid of it. "The burthen I am driven to maintain doth utterly weary me," he said: and then he added, "If Sir Philip Sidney were here, and if my Lord of Leicester follow not all the sooner, I would use Her Majesty's liberty to return home."† It is curious to guess whether, in his reference to the Earl of Leicester, Davison made a grammatical blunder, or revealed more of his private thought than would generally have been expedient. But the expression was quite correct. The affairs of the Low Countries would have been better managed if the Earl had "not all the sooner" followed his nephew.

Sidney, however, preceded him by no more than three weeks, and had only time to write a single letter, giving an account of his journey. "Upon Thursday," that is, the 18th of November, he wrote, "we came into this town, driven to land at Rammekins, because the wind began to rise in such sort as our masters durst not anchor before the town, and from thence came with as dirty a walk as ever poor Governor

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C viii. fol. 176.

† State Paper Office, MSS., *Foreign Correspondence, Holland*, vol. xxviii.

entered his charge withal."* There seems to have been not much show of greeting. All the powder had been spent by the soldiers and burghers on the previous afternoon, in their complimentary keeping of Queen Elizabeth's accession-day. Sir Philip, however, was welcome; "so much the welcomer," wrote one D'Oyley to Leicester, "because he brought a supply of money, the want whereof caused a general discontentment."† The new Governor's own words are noteworthy; "I find the people are very glad of me, and promise myself as much surety in keeping this town as the popular good-will, gotten by slight hopes, nourished by as slight conceits, may breed in me, for indeed the garrison is far too weak to command by authority, which is a pity, —for how great a jewel this is to the Crown of England and the Queen's safety, I need not write to your Lordship, who knows it so well. Yet I must needs say, the better I know it, the more I find the preciousness of it."‡

Sidney had reason to be proud of his town. "Most strongly seated by nature, pleasant, and good," as Leicester's follower, Thomas Wilford described it,§ Flushing was the key to all the Netherlands. Built on the southern edge of the little island of Walcheren, at the mouth of the Scheldt, it had command of all access by water to Antwerp, Brussels, Dendermonde, and Ghent. When rough weather made approach to it from the sea at all difficult, the neighbouring fortress of Rammekins presented an excellent refuge, so that there were always

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C viii. fol. 213.
† Ibid., fol. 211.
‡ Ibid., fol. 213.
§ Ibid., fol. 209.

opportunities of receiving troops, provisions, and any other necessaries.

On Sunday, the 21st of November, Sir Philip Sidney took formal possession of his office, the requisite oaths being exchanged between him and the Magistrates of the town. Very modestly, and very prudently, he set himself with heart and soul, to find out the temper of the people among whom he was to work, and the best means of helping them. Of the quick eye and searching thought which he brought to bear upon everything before and around him, there is evidence in the letter written before he had held actual office for a complete day. Already, it appears, he had made shrewd observation of the whole state of affairs; already he had begun to form plans and issue orders. "I have sent," he said, "for my cousin Scot's company, for Colonel Morgan's, and for my brother's, which I mean to put in the Rammekins; but I doubt I shall but change, and not increase the ensigns by any more than mine own company, for fear of breeding jealousies in this people, which is carried more by show than by substance."* He did not think very well of the Dutchmen. He found them poorly ruled; "it being strange that the people show themselves far more careful than the governors in all things touching the public welfare." He had not arrived any too early. "I think truly if my coming had been longer delayed some alterations would have followed; for the truth is the people is weary of war, and if they do not see such a course taken as may

* *Cotton MSS.*, Galba, C viii., fol. 213.

be likely to defend them, they will in a sudden give over the causes."

On only one point was Sidney at fault, and here he had much excuse for his error. Like almost every one else at that time, he looked forward very anxiously to his uncle's arrival. "Good my Lord," he wrote, "haste away, if you do come, for, all things considered, I had rather that you came not at all than came not quickly, for, uncle, by your own presence these courses may be stopped, which, if they run on, will be past remedy." "Your Lordship's coming," was the odd expression in another part of the letter, "is as much longed for as Messias is of the Jews; but indeed most necessary it is that your Lordship make great speed to reform both the Dutch and English abuses. I am more and more persuaded that, with that protection which her Majesty alloweth, the country is fully able to maintain the wars, if what they do be well ordered, and not abused as it is by the States." *

The Earl set out on the 8th of December, attended by a large part of the gayest and most gallant members of the Court, among the rest by the young Earl of Essex and Mr. Thomas Sidney, Sir Philip's youngest brother. On the 10th he arrived at Flushing, where he was met by his nephew and by Count Maurice of Nassau and all the leading townspeople. Guns were fired and soldiers marched to and fro. By order of the civil authorities bells were rung and bonfires kindled. After feasting at the Ambassador's house the Earl

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C viii. fols. 213, 214.

took boat, and went to inspect Rammekins. Thence he passed up to Middelburg, and there still greater honours were offered to him. On Christmas Eve,* a splendid feast was prepared. "In the first course of which feast," says the precise chronicler, "was nothing but boiled meats, most excellent and dainty. In the second course was all roast meats that could be thought of, pigs served in on their feet, and wild fowl, part in feathers. In the third course was all kind of baked meats, as fowls in pies with their heads and tails unplucked, all beset with pendants of her Majesty's, the Lord Lieutenant's, the Countries', and diverse Englishmen's arms on the same. The fourth and last course was a rare banquet of incredible workmanship, as a castle of crystal founded upon a rock of pearl, about the which flowed silver streams, in which lay fowls, fishes, and beasts of all kinds, some hurt, some slain, and some gasping for breath; on the top of the which was a fair virgin lady leaning and giving her hands over the castle to succour them, very wonderfully wrought. There was wine in abundance, music of all sorts, variety of all things, and wonderful welcome. The feast began at eleven o'clock before noon, and continued till five in the afternoon." †

Let that description serve for illustration of one main characteristic of Leicester's leadership. Precious time and precious gold were wasted in festivities and shows, and the redress of grievances, for which Sir Philip

* The 14th of December, according to the Old Style.

† Hollinshed (Stowe's Continuation), vol. iii. p. 1425.

Sidney looked so anxiously, was farther off than ever. It is pleasant to note how very differently the nephew was thinking and acting during these months. He was at Middelburg on the day of the six hours' dinner, and could hardly have helped sharing in it. Yet he found time for writing a long letter to his father-in-law, the Secretary of State. Already he had much to complain of. He had been appointed general of the few English troops and of all the Dutch forces in Flushing. But they were not enough. "We want supplies of men exceedingly," he wrote. "I am in a garrison as much able to command Flushing as the Tower is to answer for London; and, for ought I can yet learn, it is hardly to be redressed, for the articles intend that there must be five thousand kept for the defence of the country besides the garrisons, so as out of them, without some ado, they may hardly be drawn. I mean truly, if I cannot have it helped here, to write a protestation thereof, both to her Majesty and the Lords of the Council, as a thing that I can no way take upon me to answer, if I be not increased by, at the least, four hundred men more than yet I have." *

But even of the small force which he had, he found it difficult to take all the care that he desired. In the sixteenth century, as much as in the nineteenth, soldiers were thought excellent subjects for extortion. Sidney had employed agents for procuring good and cheap food, and he found the plan altogether a failure. "I assure you, sir," were his words, "they do as yet but

* *Harleian MSS.*, No. 285, fol. 164.

badly satisfy the soldiers, and in my opinion are merely hurtful, by means of friendship for the officers forcing the poor men to take it dearer than here they might provide themselves." Again : " The treasurer here pays our Zealand soldiers in Zealand money, which is five per cent. loss to the poor soldiers, who, God knows, want no such hindrances, being scarce able to keep life with their entire pay. If the commodity thereof be truly answered the Queen, yet truly is it but a poor increase to her Majesty, considering what loss it is to the miserable soldier. But if private lucre be made, it hath too hurtful a proportion of other such abuses here."* " It grieves me very much," was Sidney's manly protest, in a letter written to his uncle, six weeks later, on the 2nd of February, 1586, " the soldiers are so hardly dealt with in your first beginning of government, not only in their pays, but in taking booties from them, as by your Excellency's letters I find. When soldiers grow to despair and give up towns, then it is late to buy that with hundred thousands which might have been saved with a trifle."†

To Leicester's credit be it said that, as far as it was convenient to him, he tried to better the condition of his troops. But he was too busy about other things. His motive in allowing himself to be made the hero of so much feasting and display, was not simply his love of good living, or even his liking of loud-sounding praise, although both tastes were strong in him. He had sought for the Lord Lieutenancy of the Netherlands,

* *Harleian MSS.*, No. 285, fol. 164.

† *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C. ix. fol. 44.

partly out of honest desire to serve the cause with which all his worldly wisdom and all his better nature were in sympathy, but also as affording a new and wide field for his ambition. The Queen had refused the sovereignty of the Low Countries; but why might not he aspire to be virtually, and in the end, perhaps, even nominally, their king? Certainly he was in every way a better man than the deceased Duke of Anjou: was he not handsomer and cleverer? were not his Protestant principles and his training in a school of liberal politics, far stronger reasons for his taking this office than any which Catherine de' Medici could have adduced for her son? There can be no doubt that these were his thoughts, vaguely held and not at all expressed before he quitted England. He had not been long in Flanders before suspicious words were heard from him, and in his letters dim allusions were made to the probability of some change. To this change he was warily working his way, his great courtesy and affable bearing towards the Netherlanders being but means of encouraging their confidence in him; and he had every semblance of success. He had not been in the country ten weeks before he seemed to have gained everything. On the 14th of January, he assented to the offer of the States that, in addition to his humbler office of Lord Lieutenant for the Queen of England, and Commander-in-Chief of her Forces, he should be Governor-General of the United Provinces, with supreme power in all military and civil matters—licence as great and authority as complete as had ever been accorded to Prince William of Orange.

But it was only a farce, very discreditable to himself, and not very creditable to the Queen of England, which Leicester here undertook to perform. The story of Elizabeth's anger, and of the Earl's dissimulation and thorough meanness, worked out through several scenes, forms one of the oddest interludes in the history of the day. But it needs not to be related here. It is enough for us to note that the Earl, after in effect defying his mistress, wrote humbly to surrender everything, and to beg for his recall: "Here I can do your Majesty no service; there I can do you some, at the least rub your horse's heels, a service which shall be much more welcome to me than this, with all that these men can give me;"—and that the Queen, after throwing all her favourite oaths at her rebellious subject, was brought back to her old-womanish dalliance with him, letting him be her "sweet Robin" once again, finding it, as she said, hard to be so long without him, but, for the good of the Netherlands and of Europe, allowing him to retain his office until he had gained her victory.*

Of course, during these disputes, there was no leisure for fairly entering on the battle which Leicester had been commissioned to win. Yet something was being done. Antwerp, ever since its capitulation in the summer of 1585, had been one great stronghold of Spanish power in the Netherlands. But the only access to it was by way of the Scheldt, and that river was locked up by Flushing, with Sir Philip Sidney for Governor.

* See Motley's *United Netherlands*, vol. i. *passim*.

Sidney, however, wished to do much besides this passive service, valuable though it was in its way. Sometimes he was conferring with his uncle as to the best means of prosecuting the war.* Sometimes he was conducting business at Middelburg,† sometimes at the Hague,‡ sometimes at Rotterdam,§ sometimes at Bergen.‖ From the latter place he wrote to his uncle, urging the sending of forces to besiege Steenbergen. "With two thousand of your footmen, besides them that these quarters may spare, and three hundred of your horse, with them here about, I will undertake, upon my life, either to win it or to make the enemy raise his siege from Grave, or, which I most hope, both. And it shall be done in the sight of the world, which is most honourable and profitable. For these matters of practices," that is, secret practices, "I assure your Excellency they are dainty in respect of the doubleness which almost ever falls in them, and of the many impediments that fall in them,—that if notable reasons guide not, or some worthy person answer for it, they are better omitted than attempted." Grave, built upon the Meuse, not far from Arnheim, held a garrison of Netherlanders, whom a detachment of Parma's army was trying to dispossess, and Sidney wished to cause a diversion in his own corner of the Netherlands. "Therefore," he proceeded, "if it please your Excellency to let

* *Harleian MSS.*, No. 285, fol. 165.
† Ibid., fol. 165.
‡ Ibid., No. 286, fol. 74.
§ *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C xi. fol. 265.
‖ Ibid., Galba, C ix. fol. 44.

old Tutty and Read, with Sir William Stanley and Sir William Russell, with two hundred horse, come hither, I doubt not to send you honourable and comfortable news of it ; for I have good understanding thereof, and I know what the enemy can do shall not serve if this may be done. Five hundred pioneers, with munition and victuals, must be done, and, if God will, I will do you honour in it."*

The Earl of Leicester liked his nephew's zeal, and wrote, at about this time, to Sir Francis Walsingham, saying how Sir Philip was highly esteemed in those parts, and shortly would be able to do better service in the Queen's cause than could have been expected of him.† But he was not prompt in sending the requisite troops, or indeed in putting his army to any good service. "Here are no news," Sidney wrote satirically on the 12th of February from Rotterdam, "but that your band is of very handsome men, but unarmed, and merely spending money and time to no purpose."‡ A week later, after telling of several undertakings in which, though they were as yet "hopeful but not fully ripe," he trusted to do honour and good service to the great cause, and after again begging suitable aid, he went on to say—"The enemy stirs on every side, and your side must not be idle ; for, if it be, it quickly loseth reputation. I beseech your Excellency be not discouraged with the Queen's discontentments ; for, the event being anything good, your glory will shine

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C ix. fol. 44.
† *Harl. MSS.*, No. 285, fol. 183.
‡ *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C xi. fol. 265.

through those mists. Only, if it please you, have daily counsel taken of your means, how to increase them and how to husband them; and, when all is said, if they can serve, you shall make a noble war; if not, the peace is in your hand." *

The extracts which I have been making from Sidney's letters will be sufficient—though many more might be added—to show the temper with which he took part in the Low Country struggle. It was too fine and pure a temper to meet with much sympathy in those times. The Queen, who had sent him to govern Flushing, was not well pleased with his bold condemnation of her dilatoriness and parsimony.† The Earl of Leicester, though glad of his nephew's successful work, seems just now to have been almost jealous of him, and disinclined to give him proper room for exercising his talent. The greater part of the courtiers in attendance upon both Queen and Earl, always willing to infer for themselves opinions from their leaders' countenances, were, during these months, especially ready to think and speak ill of a rival whose grace and genius made him so formidable. In illustration of all this, and of much else, I shall copy entire a letter which, written a month later than the latest of those from which quotations have already been made, sums up his thoughts about the war on the continent, as it affected both himself and his country, besides giving some suggestion of his more private

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C ix. fol. 93.

† Bruce, *Leicester Correspondence*, pp. 116, 192.

life. It was addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham, and ran thus :—

"Right Honourable,

"I receive divers letters from you, full of the discomfort which I see, and am sorry to see, that you daily meet with at home ; and I think, such is the good will it pleaseth you to bear me, that my part of the trouble is something that troubles you. But, I beseech you, let it not. I had before cast my count of danger, want, and disgrace ; and, before God, sir, it is true in my heart, the love of the cause doth so far overbalance them all, that, with God's grace, they shall never make me weary of my resolution. If her Majesty were the fountain, I would fear, considering what I daily find, that we should wax dry ; but she is but a means whom God useth ; and I know not whether I am deceived, but I am faithfully persuaded that if she should withdraw herself, other springs would rise to help this action : for methinks I see the great work indeed in hand against the abusers of the world, wherein it is no greater fault to have confidence in man's power, than it is too hastily to despair of God's work. I think a wise and constant man ought never to grieve while he doth play, as a man may say, his own part truly, though others be out ; but if himself leave his hold because other mariners will be idle, he will hardly forgive himself his own fault. For me, I cannot promise of my own course, because I know there is a higher power that must uphold me, or else I shall fall ; but certainly I trust I shall not by other men's wants be drawn from myself. Therefore, good sir, to whom for my particular I am more bound than to all men besides, be not troubled with my troubles, for I have seen the worst, in my judgment, beforehand, and worse than that cannot be.

"If the Queen pay not her soldiers she must lose her garrisons. There is no doubt thereof. But no man living shall be able to say the fault is in me. What relief I can do them, I will. I will spare no danger if occasion serves. I am sure no creature shall be able to lay injustice to my charge ; and for further doubts, truly I stand not upon them. I have written by Adams to the Council plainly, and therefore let them determine.

"It hath been a costly beginning unto me this war, by reason I had nothing proportioned unto it ; my servants inexperienced, and myself every way unfurnished ; but hereafter, if the war continue, I shall pass much better through with it. For Bergen-ap-Zoom, I

delighted in it, I confess, because it was near the enemy: but especially having a very fair house in it, and an excellent air, I destined it for my wife; but, finding how you deal there, and that ill payment in my absence thence might bring forth some mischief, and considering how apt the Queen is to interpret everything to my disadvantage, I have resigned it to my Lord Willoughby, my very friend, and indeed a valliant and frank gentleman, and fit for that place; therefore I pray you know that so much of my regality is fallen. I understand I am called very ambitious and proud at home, but certainly if they knew my heart they would not altogether so judge me.

"I wrote to you a letter by Will, my Lord of Leicester's jesting player, enclosed in a letter to my wife, and I never had answer thereof. It contained something to my Lord of Leicester, and counsel that some way might be taken to stay my lady there. I since, divers times, have writ to know whether you had received them, but you never answered me that point. I since find that the knave delivered the letters to my Lady of Leicester, but whether she sent them to you, or no, I know not, but earnestly desire to do, because I doubt there is more interpreted thereof. Mr. Erington is with me at Flushing, and therefore I think myself at the more rest, having a man of his reputation: but I assure you, sir, in good earnest, I find Burlas another manner of man than he is taken for, or I expected. I would to God, Bourne had obtained his suit. He is earnest, but somewhat discomposed with the consideration of his estate. Turner is good for nothing, and worst for the sound of the hackbuts.

"We shall have a sore war upon us this summer, wherein if appointment had been kept, and these disgraces forborne, which have greatly weakened us, we had been victorious. I can say no more at this time, but pray for your long and happy life. At Utrecht, this 24th of March, 1586.

"Your humble son,

"Philip Sidney.

"I know not what to say to my wife's coming till you resolve better; for, if you run a strange course, I may take such an one here as will not be fit for any one of the feminine gender. I pray you make much of Nicholas Grey. I have been vilely deceived for armours for horsemen; if you could spare me any out of your armoury I will send them you back as soon as my own be finished. There was never so good a father found a more troublesome son.

Send Sir William Pelham, good sir, and let him have Clerk's place, for we need no clerks, and it is most necessary to have such an one in the council." *

Very soon after the receipt of that letter Lady Frances did go over to the Netherlands; and, notwithstanding the strange course of affairs, "not fit," as her husband thought, "for any of the feminine gender," she enjoyed the turmoil of life in Flushing. "Your daughter is very well and merry," wrote Sir Philip to Sir Francis, on the 28th of June.†

* Lodge, *Illustrious Personages.*

† The entire letter, of which the original is among the State Paper Office MSS. Foreign Correspondence, Holland, vol. xxxiii., is as follows:—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE,

"My cousin, Sir Richard Dyer, is gone home with resolution and leave to bring over five hundred men. The gentleman is very valiant, and supplies all other things with diligence and desire to do well. I beseech you both countenance and favour him. I am presently going towards Flushing, where I hear that your daughter is very well and merry. I know not how long this letter shall be on the way, and therefore I shall no further trouble you at this present, but, with my most hearty prayer for your long and happy life. At Utrecht, this 28th day of June, 1586.

"Your humble Son,

"PH. SIDNEY."

Let this note, written between the last two quoted letters, be read in evidence of Sidney's liberality in matters of religion, and of much else that is pleasant. It is also addressed to his father-in-law, and is to be found in the same collection, vol. xxxii.:—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE,

"I send this bearer unto you; I assure you, sir, one of excellent skill, proved by most notable cures he hath done. Yet would I not have him dealt with you till he have made proof of others

The "sore wars," of which Sidney had forebodings, soon began. Yet the share which he was permitted to take in them, highly honourable so far as it went, was, in consequence of the jealousies already referred to, by no means as large as he desired or deserved. The Protestant town of Grave, which he had wished to relieve in February, and which was held by the soldiers of that day to be "the strongest town in all the Low Countries, though but a little one," * was apparently rescued on the 6th of April by Count Hohenlo and Sir John Norris, who drove off the besieging force sent by the Duke of Parma. † "O, that her Majesty knew what millions of afflicted people she hath relieved in these countries!" exclaimed Leicester, "this summer, this summer, I say, would make an end to her immortal glory." ‡ "The English think they are going to do great things, and consider themselves masters of the

there. Only, I beseech you, let him say his judgment thereof. He healed Roger Williams in three days, when, for my part, I thought he would be dead in three days. He is an Anabaptist in religion, which is pity; for in everything he is honest. Yet still I wish his hand and skill be tried with some other. I will now say no more, but pray heartily for your long and happy life. At Middelburg, this 10th of May, 1586.

"Your humble son,
"PH. SIDNEY.

"I am going to the Camp, when, if it please you, to direct your letters to Arnau. But now I remember me, in some respects I had rather they came the Flushing way, for thence they will come maidenly to me."

* Motley, vol. ii. p. 10.

† Ibid., vol. ii. pp. 11—14.

‡ *Leicester Correspondence*, p. 264.

field," wrote Parma.* Nevertheless, the wary Spaniard was planning busily, and, although in a bad cause, courageously. On the 7th of June the Duke's flag was flying upon the topmost tower in Grave, and it was the Earl's turn to grow angry and desponding.† Of this variable and unsatisfactory sort was the war.

Meanwhile, Sir Philip Sidney was having other, and to him far greater troubles over which to grieve. On the 5th of May, at about four o'clock in the morning, his father died in the Bishop's Palace at Worcester. For seven days, we are told, he had been confined to his bed by a sort of cold palsy, the result of incautiously travelling in a barge from Bewdley to Worcester, too soon after an attack of diarrhœa. He wanted six weeks of being fifty-seven years old, and during six-and-twenty years he had been Lord President of Wales, without interruption in his appointment, though several times called away to do special work in Ireland and elsewhere. At Worcester his body was embalmed, the entrails being buried in the Cathedral of that town. His heart was transferred to Ludlow, and there interred with much pomp on the 21st of June, by the side of his daughter Ambrozia.‡ The rest of his body was

* Motley, vol. ii. p. 18.

† Ibid., vol. ii. p. 21.

‡ Some time ago,—we are told by Nichols in his *Royal Progresses*, vol. ii. p. 309,—there was found in the garden of Edward Coleman, Esq., of Leominster, in Herefordshire, a small leaden urn, four inches deep, and four inches in diameter at the top, with this inscription :—

HER . LIH . THE
HART . OF . SYR
HENRY . SYDNEY L.P. ANNO
DOMINI . 1586.

entombed at Penshurst. "For his death," wrote Edmund Molineux, his sometime secretary, "there was great moan and lamentation, especially by those under his government, as having lost that special nobleman, whom for courtesy they loved, for justice amongst them they highly honoured, and for many other his rare gifts and singular virtues they, in his life-time, greatly esteemed, and at his death marvellously bemoaned, lifting up both hands and hearts to Almighty God, and heartily wishing and humbly praying a like might succeed in the place as he had been." *

* Hollinshed, vol. iii. p. 1553. The same loving dependent, in his contribution to Hollinshed's work, said much more in praise of Sir Henry Sidney. Part of it, concerning his government of Ireland and Wales, has been repeated on a former page. A little more may be summed up here. In the training of his own mind and body, we learn, Sir Henry set an example to all around him. For such dispatch as Francis Bacon defined as consisting of "order, and distribution, and singling out of parts," he was famous. In oratory, we are told, he displayed such readiness of speech, such flowing eloquence, such sweet delivery, and such excellent memory, that there was rarely his equal. When travelling, all his company, even the youngest and healthiest, gave in before he would, though his health was broken. But then he was renowned for his moderation in eating and drinking, and it is recorded that he never, save when he was ill, rested for more than six hours at night, and never slept by day. Naturally hot-tempered and placed often in situations especially likely to irritate him, he often spoke and wrote angrily, but that was all. "My word is my worst," he used to say, "and so they shall find it." Nothing ever grieved him more than such unkindness and ingratitude as he plentifully received from both Queen and subject, and many of his extant letters are full of indignant complainings and even reproaches : but who, knowing the story of his life, can blame him for this ? For himself, he made it a grand rule of his conduct, never to forsake any one who had once been his friend, never to betray any confidence that had at any time been placed in him.

Three months later, on the 9th of August, Sir Philip lost his mother. "During the whole course of her sickness," we learn from the authority just cited, "and specially a little before it pleased Almighty God to call her hence to His mercy, she used such godly speeches, earnest and effectual persuasions to all those about her, and unto such others as came of friendly courtesy to visit her, to exhort them to repentance and amendment of life, and dehort them from all sin and lewdness, as wounded the consciences and inwardly pierced the hearts of many that heard her. And though before they knew her to exceed many of her sex in singularity of virtue and quality—as good speech, apt and ready conceit, excellence of wit, and notable eloquent delivery (for none could match her, and few or none come near her, either in the good conceit and frame of orderly writing, indicting and speedy dispatching, or facility of gallant, sweet, delectable, and courtly speaking, at least that in this time I myself have known, heard, or read of)—yet in this her last action and ending of her life, as it were one specially at that instant called of God, she so far surpassed herself in discreet, wise, effectual, sound, and grounded reasons, all tending to zeal and piety, as the same almost astonished the hearers to hear and conceive such plenty of goodly and pithy matter to come from such a creature; who, although for a time she seemed to the world to live obscurely, yet she ended this life and left the world most confidently, and to God, no doubt, most gloriously, to the exceeding comfort of all them, which are not few, that loved or honoured her, or the great and renowned

house whereof she was descended." * In those words, when all deductions have been made on account of the proper vehemence of friendly admiration, there is the true ring of righteous praise, and the praise is borne out by all the little else that we know concerning Lady Mary Sidney.

While he wept, as he could not have failed to weep, at the loss of such noble parents, Sir Philip little thought how very near was the end of his own short life. We have only to follow him through a few brief, brilliant exercises of military skill, and then to go as mourners to his grave.

It seems that in February he had endeavoured, with such scanty troops as he could muster, to execute the plan he had formed against Steenbergen, in Brabant, but a sudden thaw had occurred and so hindered his attempt.† A little later the treachery of the enemy had rendered abortive a design which he had formed against Gravelines, and he could only show his skill in saving his party from destruction.‡ Not until July had he the chance of doing any memorable work in the way of active warfare.

Then, however, he and Count Maurice of Nassau found congenial employment in the capture of Axel, a strong town in Zealand, a few miles from the southern bank of the Scheldt. The scheme started with Maurice, who in submitting it to Leicester asked that it might

* Hollinshed, vol. iii. p. 1553.

† *The Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney* (1587).

‡ *Cotton. MSS.*, Galba, C ix. fol. 56. Fulke Greville, pp. 136—138.

be confided to no one save his friend Sidney. Upon Sidney's recommendation, the Earl gave his assent, appointing his nephew to take the lead. Three thousand foot soldiers made up Sir Philip's little army, whereof five hundred were his own band, another five hundred being commanded by Lord Willoughby, and the rest serving under the Count and some other brave young adventurers, of whom one was the son of Sir Christopher Hatton. On the night of Tuesday, the 6th of July, the volunteers met upon the water, in front of Flushing, and thence proceeded very stealthily, first by boat and then on foot, to within a mile of Axel. Then Sidney summoned his men and addressed to them some true-hearted words. He showed them how it was God's battle they were fighting, how the welfare of their Queen and country in a measure depended upon it, how they were contending with the followers of a false religion, enemies alike of God and of the true Church. They were doing no less than help to quell the power of Antichrist, he said, in opposing the tyranny of Spain, a nation so lawless and reprobate that God had appointed its punishment. He reminded them that they were Englishmen, members of a race whose bravery had roused the dread and won the praise of the whole world: it behoved them to care nothing for danger or for death in serving their Queen, in furthering their country's honour, and in aiding a people so grievously in want of aid. Moreover, he added, his eye was on them, and no one who fought bravely should go unrewarded. That speech, we are told, "did so link the minds of the people that they did desire

rather to die in that service than to live in the contrary." *

At two o'clock after midnight the attack was made. Some thirty or forty men, headed by Sir Philip Sidney, jumped into the ditch, swam warily across, scaled the walls, and opened the gate for the rest. The sleepy garrison had only time to arm itself and offer brave resistance when resistance was too late. By placing a band of picked soldiers in the market-place, with orders only to move for the sake of giving temporary aid to any of the straggling companies which might be too fiercely opposed by the enemy, Sidney ensured strength to every section of his party. About six out of the twelve hundred men set to defend the city, besides very many burghers, were slain by the sword or pushed into the water. Four citadels were taken, and, besides a large quantity of rich spoil, property to the value of two million florins was destroyed. Sidney spent ten or twelve days in seeing that everything was safe, and that there was no chance of such a reverse as had happened at Grave in the spring, and then, leaving eight or nine hundred trustworthy soldiers in the garrison, he joined his uncle and the main army at Arnheim, having first, out of his own purse, rewarded all the finest instances of courage and good discipline.†

* Stowe, p. 733.

† Hollinshed, vol. iii. p. 1554 ; Fulke Greville, p. 135 ; *Leicester Correspondence*, pp. 337, 338 ; State Paper Office, *Foreign Correspondence, Holland*, vol. xxxiv. under dates 8 and 29 July, 1586. Mr. Motley follows a letter of Sir Thomas Cecil's to his father, in saying that Sidney came last into the town. I have preferred, however, to believe the

This capture of Axel was the bravest deed yet done by the English in the Low Countries, and the chief honour belonged to Sidney. Great praise justly came to him from nearly all quarters. I cannot see what the Queen thought of it, but I find that on the 11th of July, a few days before the report of the victory could have reached London, Sir Francis Walsingham wrote to tell the Earl of Leicester of her displeasure at his being made a colonel. "She layeth the blame upon Sir Philip, as a thing by him ambitiously sought. I see her Majesty very apt upon every light occasion to find fault with him." *

In the present instance the Queen was angry because she had wished this particular colonelcy to have been conferred on Count Hohenlo, familiarly called Hollock, a man who, not without good points in his character, was famous for his drunken habits, and for the vices always more or less incident to drunkenness. Meaning to act well, he often did great mischief, and of this unfortunate tendency, Sidney,—who, if his rival in Queen Elizabeth's favour, was always on friendly terms with him,—had one very clear illustration.

Hohenlo, with Sir William Pelham and some other friends, had planned a military excursion into Brabant, to be made on the 6th of August, and he invited Sir Philip to be of the party. But Sidney, though he

reports of the Earl of Leicester, who wrote to the Queen, "My nephew Sidney, with his band, would needs have the first entry," etc.; and to Walsingham, "Your son Philip, with his bands, had the leading and entering the town, which was notably performed," etc.

* *Leicester Correspondence*, p. 345.

hurried from Flushing and persuaded Edward Norris to accompany him, was too late to share in the sport. Perhaps it was well, since nothing was done beyond the wanton burning of a village and the killing of some boors. He was waiting in Hohenlo's quarters when the party returned, and the Count, though glad to see him, showed evident dissatisfaction at the presence of his friend, the Pelhams and the Norrises being old enemies. He invited them all to supper, however, and soon drank himself into a quarrelling mood. Norris also, knowing himself to be an unwelcome guest, was willing enough for a dispute. Therefore one quickly arose. High words passed between the two fiery men, and much trouble would have followed, had not Sidney and the least boisterous members of the company done their best to restore peace.*

But Sidney was to do more memorable things in the few weeks which he had yet to live. He was at Flushing again by the 14th of August.† On that day

* Motley, vol. ii. pp. 92—98, where the story is very fully given.

† From Flushing, three weeks earlier, he had written to Sir Francis Walsingham an interesting letter, illustrating, like some others which I have quoted, his anxiety, while serving a noble cause, to be lacking in service to no single individual of worth. It is from the State Paper Office MSS., *Foreign Correspondence, Holland*, vol. xxxiv.

"Right Honourable,

"I know it needless to recommend Mr. Fremin, who hath been so long and so well known unto you, yet my good will cannot omit, though needlessly, to beseech you to employ your favour towards him, since you cannot do it to any man that will better deserve it of the public, and of your Honour in particular. My Lord hath written him to raise a regiment, in which he means to draw together divers

he wrote three letters, all very valuable as indicating the zeal with which he was serving the cause of the Netherlands, while the Queen and her Council at home gave painful evidence of the parsimony which did so much to lessen their good work. To the Lords of Her Majesty's Privy Council he wrote thus boldly and eloquently :—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE MY SINGULAR GOOD LORDS,

"I send this gentleman, Mr. Burnam, humbly to give your Lordships to understand the weak store of all sort of necessary munition that both this town and the Castle of Ramekins have. These States I have tried to the uttermost, but, partly with the opinion it more toucheth her Majesty because it is her pawn, but principally because they have ever present occasion to employ both all they have and indeed much more upon the places nearest to the enemy, we in this town, and, as I think, Brill, shall still demand and still go without. Therefore I cannot but most humbly lay it before your Lordships. By the grace of God, my trust is in Him, that my life shall discharge me of blame, but [not] I nor all that be here can perform the services we owe to her Majesty without such merely necessary things. I will neither speak of the consequence of the place, nor of any quantity. Your Lordships can better judge. I do only protest to your Honours that I think it very likely we shall have occasion to use it ; and till then it may be kept by some officer appointed by her Majesty, never one grain of it to be used for no services till it be for the last point of extremity. There is nothing will keep these people in better order than that they see we are strong. I beseech your Lordships to consider it according to the weight of the cause,

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friends who be in England. His interest is very good, and none have charge on this side who get better reputation for using their soldiers than he doth. But I know it superfluous to use more words of him to your Honour. This only hath been to testify mine own affection, which I will conclude with hearty prayer for your long and happy life. At Flushing, this 25th of July, 1586.

"Your humble son,

"PH. SIDNEY."

and so most humbly take my leave, praying to God to grant your Lordships long and happy lives. At Flushing, this 14th of August, 1586.

"Your Lordships' most humbly to be commanded,

"PH. SIDNEY."*

The second letter, telling the same story in more friendly terms, was addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham :—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE,

"I humbly pray you to confer with Burnam, how I am left in this town ; a thing I ever foresaw would be, but could not remedy it but from thence where I have often solicited it. I beseech you, sir, labour for me, or rather for her Majesty, in it. She need be discouraged with nothing while she keeps these principal sea places. Nay, I think it were hard to say whether it were not better for us to embrace no more, but we do still make camps and straight again mar them for want of means, and so lose our money to no purpose whereas, if we would gall him, now in Friesland, now in Flanders, he should have no leisure to try before hands as he doth. I humbly beseech you to favour Burnam, whom I send in this cause, that his suit may be obtained, if it be possible. He is one I love exceeding well. And so I humbly take my leave, and pray for your long and happy life. At Flushing, this 14th of August.

"Your humble son,

"PH. SIDNEY."†

The third letter, written hastily at a later part of the day, and by another messenger, was also addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham. Intended for the honest Secretary's private reading, it contains a more emphatic allusion to the Earl of Leicester's worthlessness as a general, than I can find that Sidney, plain-spoken as he was, elsewhere ventured to make. The mutinous

* State Paper Office MSS., *Foreign Correspondence, Holland*, vol. xxxv.

† State Paper Office MSS., *Foreign Correspondence, Holland*, vol. xxxv.

disposition of the troops, of which he had evidence on this particular night, is often referred to in the correspondence of the period :—

"Right Honourable,

"I most humbly beseech you to favour Captain White, my servant ; and as honest a servant as ever I have. To Burnam and him I have told my mind in all things. I often craved the treasurer might be commanded to pay this place. I assure you, sir, this night we were at a fair plunge to have lost all for want of it. We are now four months behind, a thing unsupportable in this place. *To complain of my Lord of Leicester you know I may not : but this is the case.* If once the soldiers fall to a thorough mutiny, this town is lost, in all likelihood. I did never think our nation had been so apt to go to the enemy as I find them. If this place might possibly have some peculiar care of it, it should well deserve it ; for, in fine, this island, if once her Majesty would make herself sure of it, is well worth all the charge her Majesty hath ever been at in this cause, and all the King of Spain's force should never be able to recover it, though all the rest were lost, and, without it, should be never able to invade England. I have already gotten in a Dutch company at my commandment, and into camp here, so as with no great matter I could make her Majesty sure of this isle, if this town were well provided with men and munition. But I leave more discourse to Mr. Burnam ; and so I humbly take my leave, praying for your long and happy life. At Flushing, this 14th of August, 1586.

"Your humble son,

"Ph. Sidney."*

After his success at Axel, Sidney spent much of his time in attendance upon his uncle, and in giving advice upon the employment of the army. He was at Arnheim at the close of this month of August, and on the 30th he went with the Earl to share

* State Paper Office MSS., *Foreign Correspondence, Holland*, vol. xxxv.

in the investment of Doesburg, a weak fortress a few miles westward on the Yssel. Doesburg was itself of no value, but its reduction was important as opening up the way to Zutphen ; and upon the capture of that town depended the mastery of the Yssel. For this Leicester was very anxious. On the 2nd of September he gained Doesburg, and on the 4th he wrote to Walsingham, saying,—"Zutphen can now little harm us, for it is environed on every side." *

In the various accounts of the battle of Zutphen there are irreconcileable contradictions. Hardly anything is clearly traceable ; but about the details of Sidney's memorable share in it there is not much confusion. The impending struggle in this quarter was on both sides reckoned important, and both made great preparations

* *Leicester Correspondence*, Ibid. p. 406. While waiting for the attack on Zutphen, Sidney wrote thus to his father-in-law (State Paper Office MSS., *Foreign Correspondence*, *Holland*, vol. xxxv.) :—

"Right Honourable,

"These only shall be in the most humble and effectual manner I can, to desire your thorough friendship to one of the most assured friends that I have ever had. It is my Lord Burrow, who, by Sir Thomas Cecil's choice, and my Lord the General's very good liking, is left by him in his absence Governor of Brill. If sickness or other cause stay Sir Thomas in England, then my suit, as earnest as I can make for anything, is that he may succeed him. For, it being most necessary that some man of very good countenance remain there, he—both in valour, judgment, and religion, deserving it—should be exceedingly disgraced if, being left in it by Sir Thomas, another should take it from him. The matter, and my mind, I shall not need further to manifest to your Honour, but recommending it, as myself, humbly leave you to the protection of the Almighty. At the Camp, by Doesburg, this 10th of September, 1586.

"Your humble son,

"Ph. Sidney."

for it. The town was invested on the 13th of September, Sir John Norris, with Count Lewis William of Nassau and Sir Philip Sidney, being appointed to watch it from the land, while Leicester himself resolved to guard the water. The Duke of Parma, on the other hand, laboured hard to stock it with large supplies of both men and food. On the 21st of the month the Earl received information that a great quantity of provision was at Deventer, a few miles up the river, waiting to be smuggled in before day-break next morning. He resolved that the thing should not be done, and the garrison apparently expecting his resistance, made suitable arrangements for opposing him. Hence arose the battle.*

The morning of Thursday, the 22nd of September, was miserably misty,—so misty, we learn from one authority, that nothing could be seen ten paces off. † Out

* *Leicester Correspondence*, p. 414.

† Ibid. p. 414. Addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham, and dated this 22nd of September, though written, I am inclined to think, during the previous day or night, is the last letter, save one, which I am able to quote; doubtless the last, save two, ever penned by Sidney. Its hasty writing, making it in some parts hard to decipher, and its slipshod English, add to its value; showing, as they do, how—in the hurry and excitement incident to preparations for a battle—Sir Philip Sidney found time for thinking and acting kindly on behalf of one of his thousand poor deserving friends. I have copied it from the State Paper Office MSS., *Foreign Correspondence*, *Holland*, vol. xxxvi. :—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE,

"This bearer, Richard Smyth, her Majesty's old servant, hath my Lord of Leicester's letters directed unto you, in his favour for his service to her Majesty, and herewithal requesteth mine, hoping your Lordship will the rather help him. I beseech you therefore the rather at my request to help him, and be the good mean for the poor man's preferment, having so long sued, and, now being aged and

of about five hundred Englishmen, it seems that a party of two hundred horsemen, with Sidney at their head, advanced to the very walls of the town. Then suddenly the fog dispersed and the little company found themselves in a very unexpected and very perilous position. Above a thousand of the enemy's cavalry were stationed in readiness to receive them; and they were within range both of the great guns which played from the ramparts and of the still more effective muskets handled by troops secreted in the trenches. Very bravely they charged, and then covered their retreat, after an hour-and-a-half's hard fighting. Sidney's horse being killed under him, he was placed in great danger, and by his over-eagerness to appear fearless, the danger was much heightened. Having gone into the field stoutly armed, as he should be, he had met Sir William Pelham, the Lord Marshal of the camp, lightly covered, and, that he might not be outdone, he had thrown off his cuisses. Though thus exposed, he promptly mounted a fresh horse and joined in the second charge, shared by some new recruits, and as bold and effective as the former one. Then there was a third onset, undertaken by all the Englishmen who were in the field. In the three attacks five hundred slew nearly as many

weak, hath such need of this or such other good mean for his relief, as, without it, he may rest, as I fear, in more misery than the desert of so long service requireth. I commend him and his cause to your Lordship's good favour and help, and so I humbly take my leave. From the Camp at Zutphen, this 22nd September, 1586.

"Your humble Son,

"Ph. Sidney."

of the enemy as their whole force amounted to, and lost about a fourth of their own number.

In the last charge, Sidney was among the wounded. A shot from one of the concealed muskets entered his left leg, at some distance above the knee, and, cleaving the bone it glanced upwards far into the thigh. His new horse, not well trained to battle, took fright and galloped off the field; but the brave rider, though bleeding and faint, retained his seat. He was carried to the place near which the Earl of Leicester stood. Then it was that, overcome with thirst, he called for something to drink. Presently a bottle of water was brought, and he hastily put it to his lips. But at that moment he saw a poor soldier who was being carried past, and the dying man set greedy, ghastly eyes upon the precious draught. Sir Philip drank nothing. He handed the flask to the soldier, saying as he did so, "Thy necessity is yet greater than mine." *

"Oh Philip," exclaimed the Earl of Leicester, who had kept himself well out of danger all through the morning, "I am truly grieved to see thee!" "Oh, noble Sir Philip," cried Sir William Russel, himself bleeding from wounds which he had just now bravely received, and letting manly tears fall upon the weary body which he clasped as firmly and tenderly as if he had been a lover holding his dying mistress, "Oh, noble Sir Philip, never did man attain hurt so honourably or serve so valiantly as you!" † But Sidney modestly

* Fulke Greville, pp. 143—145; *Leicester Correspondence*, pp. 414, 416.

† Stowe, p. 737.

declared that he had done no more than God and England claimed that he should do, and that his life could not be more nobly spent than in such service as that day's.

"How God will dispose of him I know not," wrote Leicester next day to Sir Thomas Heneage, "but I must needs greatly fear the worst, the blow is so dangerous a place and so great. Yet did I never hear of any man that did abide the dressing and setting of his bones better than he did. I would you had stood by to hear his most loyal speeches to her Majesty, his constant mind to the cause, his loving care over me, and his most resolute determination for death; not a jot appalled for his blow, that is the most grievous that ever I saw with such a bullet; riding so long, a mile and a-half, upon his horse ere he came to the Camp; not ceasing to speak still of her Majesty, being glad if his hurt and death might any way honour her; for hers he was whilst he lived, and God's he was sure to be if he died; prayed all men to think that the cause was as well her Majesty's as the Countries', and not to be discouraged—'for you have now such success as may encourage us all, and this my hurt is the ordinance of God by the hap of war.'" *

In that temper, after receiving such temporary relief as surgeons could give, the wounded soldier was conveyed in his uncle's barge to Arnheim, quitting for ever the battle-field in which he had seemed about to work so bravely. The war was waged without him,

* Collins, *Introduction to the Sidney Papers*, p. 105.

and, after a time, without the Earl of Leicester, whose inefficient management damaged the Protestant cause, and brought him into disfavour with the States which had begun by idolizing him. The bickerings between the English and the Netherlanders, and the consequent weakness in conducting the warfare, mainly chargeable upon Leicester, encouraged King Philip of Spain to undertake the invasion of England, and the Armada fight was the result. Had Sidney lived to take part in it, a new glory might have been added to his honoured name: but he died twenty months too soon.

CHAPTER XVI.

SICKNESS AND DEATH.

1586.

For five-and-twenty days Sir Philip Sidney lay at Arnheim in the house of a lady, named Gruitthueissens.* We are told that in the hearts of the preachers and physicians who attended him, he caused great wonderment. The former marvelled at his rare godliness; the latter, at his strange courage and patience.

When the surgeons came to him, he charged them freely to cut and search to the bottom of his wound. If they would do that and cure him, he said, he would bear all the pain with readiness, and would reward them to his utmost: if, on the other hand, their ignorance or overtenderness led them astray, they must remember that such kindness would be a cruelty to him and a discredit to themselves. "With love and care well mixed," it is written, "they began the cure, and continued it some sixteen days, with such confidence of his recovery as the joy of their hearts overflowed their discretion, and made them spread the intelligence of it to the Queen and all his noble friends in England, where it was received, not as private, but as public news." †

* *Archæologia*, vol. xxviii. p. 35.

† Stowe, p. 737; Fulke Greville, pp. 165, 166.

The fourth day after the disaster, at two o'clock in the morning, the sufferer fell for the first time into a sound sleep. "My hope is now very good," said the Earl of Leicester,—who, when we have blamed him for his numerous faults and numberless follies, must be thought kindly of for a certain love which all life long he had had for his nephew, and which was now especially apparent,—in a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham.* On the 2nd of October he wrote again, saying, "All the worst days be passed, as both surgeons and physicians have informed me, and he amends as well as is possible in this time, and he himself finds it, for he sleeps and rests well, and hath a good stomach to eat, without fear or distemper at all. I thank God for it."†

But if the patient sometimes shared the hopes of physicians and friends, he was soonest undeceived. Indeed, from the very first he seems to have rightly understood his condition. On being removed from the battle-field, he was heard to whisper thanks to God for not taking him at once, but rather leaving him a little time for self-examination and preparation for death.‡ On the last day of September he sent for his friend George Gifford, an excellent divine and a famous preacher. A short memoir written by this visitor gives us some interesting information respecting the circumstances of Sidney's death-bed. "The guilt of sin," he recorded,

* *Leicester Correspondence*, p. 415. † Ibid. p. 422.

‡ *Cotton MSS.*, Vitellius, C. xvii. fo. 382. The disastrous fire which ruined so many of the Cottonian MSS. has damaged this one. It has been printed by Zouch.

"the present beholding of death, the terror of God's judgment seat, which seemed in hot displeasure to cut him down, concurring, did make a fear and astonishment in his mind, which he did overcome after conference had, touching both the doctrine and the example of the Scripture in that matter, where it was proved unto him that the great servants of God were astonished with horror and fear of God's wrath in their private afflictions; otherwise how should they be taught obedience and reverence to stand in awe of their Father? how should they be made conformable to Christ in suffering, if they should feel no terrors of God's wrath in their soul for sin? After such serious conversations on the design of God in afflicting the children of men, with great cheerfulness he did often lift up his eyes and hands, giving thanks to God that He did chastise him with a loving and fatherly coercion and to his infinite profit, whether the soul live or die. Being advertised that David and other holy men of God in time of their extreme danger, did call to God for help, and solemnly vowed to set forth the praises of God when He should deliver them, and that it were very good he should do the like,—that is, to vow with an unfeigned heart and full purpose, if God should give him life, to consecrate the same to His service, and to make His glory the mark of all his actions,—to this he answered, in words expressive of his unfeigned repentance, and of his firm resolution not to live as he had done; for, he said, he had walked in a vague course. And these words he spake with great vehemence, both of speech and of gesture, and doubled it, to the intent that it might be

manifest how unfeignedly he meant to turn more thoughts unto God than ever before.

"Continuing thus certain days," the narrative proceeds, "very desirous of conference out of the Holy Scriptures, he requested that some goodly book might be gotten to read unto him, which might, as he said, increase mortification, and confirm his mind. He did also sundry times complain that his mind was dull in prayer, and that his thoughts did not ascend up so quick as he desired. For, having before in manful sort entreated the Lord with fervent prayer, he thought he should at all times feel that fervency, and was grieved when he found any thought interrupting the same;— and for the power of God's Word how great knowledge is there,' said he, 'and how little do men feel the power and working which is inward.'

"At another time, lying silent, of a sudden he brake forth into expressions denoting his sense of the wretchedness of man, 'a poor worm,' of the mercies of God, of the dispensations of Providence, that reacheth unto all things. And this he did with vehement gesture and great joy, even ravished with the consideration of God's omnipotency, providence, and goodness; of whose fatherly love, in remembering to chastise him for his good, he now felt, adding, how unsearchable the mysteries of God's Word are."*

In thoughts like these Sir Philip Sidney found happiness on his bed of pain. We are told that, among other occupations, he gave utterance to his sentiments in a

* *Cotton MSS.*, Vitellius, C. xvii. fo. 382.

short poem, entitled *La Cuisse Rompue*, also that he wrote to Belarius, a learned divine with whom he was acquainted, "a large epistle, in very pure and eloquent Latin," a copy of which, "for the excellency of the phrase and the pithiness of the matter," was transmitted to Queen Elizabeth.* No copy of either production remains for us to read.

As soon as she heard of his disaster, his wife, though far advanced in pregnancy, hurried to attend upon him at Arnheim. Having, as we have seen, quitted England to share his company, in the spring, she had probably been residing constantly at Flushing, where he was with her when not engaged in some military project. But, wherever she had been before, we know that she was with him now, nursing him with all womanly and wifely tenderness, and without regard for her own perilous position.†

Nor were there wanting other anxious watchers by his bedside, or expressions of sympathy from those who were absent. His brother Robert, to whom he had assigned the government of Rammekins, who had served with him at Zutphen and elsewhere, and who was already winning fame by reason of his bravery and warlike skill, was with him as often as he could be spared, and constantly when the real nature of the catastrophe was known.‡ Thomas, the youngest of the three brothers, who was likewise finding employment in the Low Countries, must also have been a fre-

* Hollinshed, vol. iii. p. 1555.

† *Leicester Correspondence*, pp. 430, 445.

‡ Ibid. *passim*.

quent visitor at Arnheim. The Earl of Leicester, moreover, went thither whenever he could, to express the real grief he felt at his nephew's trouble, and to offer such words of kindly-meant though hollow comfort as none so well as he knew how to use.* The Queen, very soon after receiving intelligence of the battle and its results, sent a messenger with comforting letters, written by her own hand, and bidding him return immediately with full information respecting the noble sufferer's health, and the chances of his recovery.† Count Hohenlo is one of the friends mentioned as showing an especial interest in Sir Philip. He had himself received a severe musket wound in his neck, but when he heard of Sidney's danger, he generously sent his own favourite surgeon to attend upon the man whom he heartily admired, notwithstanding the reproof and the opposition which he had several times received from him. One day the surgeon returned to dress his master's wound. "How is Sir Philip?" eagerly inquired the Count. The surgeon, more discerning than many of his companions in leechcraft, answered with a heavy countenance, that things were not going on well with him. "Away, villain!" were the unexpected words which Hohenlo, in the true tone of a drunkard's generosity, thundered at him: "Away, and never see my face again till thou bring better news of that man's recovery, for whose redemption many such as I were happily lost!" ‡

* *Leicester Correspondence, passim.*

† Ibid. p. 438.

‡ Fulke Greville, pp. 147, 148.

Gradually it became apparent to all that things were going anything but well with Sir Philip. But they were very loth to think so. On the 6th of October, Leicester wrote to tell Walsingham that he was better than ever. "He feeleth no grief now but his long lying, which he must suffer."* That suffering, however, meant death, and the Earl, in saying that his nephew felt no grief, showed only that he perceived expression of none. Sidney's pains were really more acute than ever. They came more fitfully, and with token of more vital malady. In such relief as he had he saw symptoms of decay rather than of recovery. He patiently submitted himself to the surgeons' applications and posturings, although his very shoulder-bones were worn through the skin from lying in one fixed position; but he had very little hope.†

Soon hope left him altogether. One morning, about the 8th of October, while he was lifting up the sheets in hope of easing his wearied body, he smelt a strange and noisome savour about him, something very different, as he perceived, from the oils and salves to which he had grown accustomed. This he guessed to be the commencement of mortification in his limbs; and so—notwithstanding the loving contradictions of his friends, and the learned arguments of his physicians—it proved. From that moment he felt sure of his approaching death.‡

He did not fear to die, he said. "I have bound

* *Leicester Correspondence*, p. 429.
† Fulke Greville, p. 149,
‡ Ibid. pp. 149, 150.

my life to God, and if the Lord cut me off and suffer me to live no longer, then I shall glorify Him and give up myself to His service." Yet he was afraid that the pangs of his death might be so grievous that he should lose his mental vigour before the mere life was gone! and this thought greatly troubled him.* But he knew how to relieve himself from this and every other trouble. He called into his presence all the ministers who were in attendance upon him, men of very contradictory opinions upon many minor matters, but one in their wish to guide this brave soul most happily to Heaven. "Before them," we are informed, "he made such a confession of the faith as no book, but the heart, can feelingly disclose." Then he asked them to accompany him in prayer, and, to the surprise of many, desired their leave that he should himself conduct the service; seeing, he said, that the secret sins of his heart were best known to himself, and that no one was so able as he was to draw down the precise blessings of which he stood in greatest need. And he did pray, with words so earnest and eloquent, that the whole company was stirred. Sighs and tears often interrupted their joint devotions; "yet could no man judge whether the wrack of heavenly agony, whereupon they all stood, were forced by sorrow for him or by admiration of him."†

During these last days his talk was more than ever about celestial things. A favourite topic with him was the immortality of the soul. He aimed, in the con-

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Vitellius, C. xvii.

† Fulke Greville, pp. 151, 152.

versation, first, to see what true knowledge the soul retains in her own essence, and what independent light is shed by her, as in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Zoroaster, and others; and then to compare it with the more pregnant authority of the Sacred Volume, through which shone clearly and brightly the Divine light. He discussed these themes, said his friend, "not that he wanted instruction or assurance, but because this fixing of a lover's thoughts upon those eternal beauties was not only a cheering up of his decaying spirits, but, as it were, a taking possession of that immortal inheritance which was given unto him by his brotherhood in Christ." *

Soon it was plain to everyone that he must quickly die. He stedfastly declared himself ready and very anxious, since thus his earthly pains would be over and his heavenly joys would be commenced. But he did not forget the duty of holding life as long as he could. On the evening of Sunday, the 16th of October, after he had been ill for twenty-four days, he suddenly raised himself in his bed, and resting his elbow on the pillow, called for a piece of paper. Then, animated perhaps by a new hope, he wrote this touching little note to his friend, John Wier, the chief physician of the Duke of Cleves, and the famous pupil of Cornelius Agrippa:—"*Mi Wiere, veni, veni. De vitâ periclitor et te cupio. Nec vivus, nec mortuus, ero ingratus. Plura non possum, sed obnixè oro ut festines. Vale. Tuus* PH. SIDNEY." †

* Fulke Greville, p. 153.

† Hollinshed, vol. iii. p. 1555. *Archæologia*, vol. xxviii. p. 38.

But death came more quickly than the physician. Before day-break on Monday, George Gifford walked gently to the bedside, and asked Sidney how he did. "I feel myself more weak," he answered. "I trust," said the minister, "you are well and thoroughly prepared for death, if God shall call you." Sidney was silent for a time, and looked perplexed. "I have a doubt," he said, at length; "pray resolve me in it. I have not slept this night. I have very earnestly and humbly besought the Lord to give me some sleep; but He hath denied it. This causeth me to doubt that God doth not regard me, nor hear any of my prayers." In a few wise, simple words, Gifford explained how, upon all matters touching salvation and the eternal life, the Creator had given an absolute promise that He would hear and answer every prayer of His creatures; but for things of this life, the promise was only conditional: for His knowledge of what was right was far clearer than any human being's: had not the Saviour himself been driven, in unspeakable anguish, to say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt?" There was a smile on Sir Philip's face as he said, "I am fully satisfied and resolved with this answer. No doubt it is even so. I will submit myself to His will in these outward things." But his difficulty could not be altogether removed. After another pause, he whispered, "I had this night a trouble in my mind: for, searching myself, methought I had not a full and sure hold of Christ. After I had continued in this perplexity awhile, how strangely God did deliver me! for it was a strange deliverance which

I had. There came to my mind a vanity in which I delighted, whereof I had not rid myself. I rid myself of it, and presently my joy and comfort returned." *

Perhaps the vanity of which the recollection afflicted this gentle spirit was the clinging to life, and the seeking of it through human aid, evinced in his letter to Wier. At any rate, he now seemed quite resigned to his approaching dissolution. He was told that he must not expect to live many hours longer. "I know it," he said; "I know it." But the old fear, of losing his vigour of mind, came back. "I do with trembling heart, and most humbly intreat the Lord," he declared, "that the pangs of death may not be so grievous as to take away my understanding." Yet after Gifford had tendered another of his comforting speeches, showing how all things were to be left in the hands of a Ruler whose love and wisdom were alike infinite, he lifted up his eyes and hands, and exclaimed with emphasis, "I would not change my joy for the empire of the world." †

Presently he called for the will which he had indicted on the 30th of September, and having carefully heard it read over, he added a codicil, rich in indication of his generous disposition. The whole document, according to the true judgment of his friend Fulke Greville, "will ever remain for a witness to the world that those sweet and large, even when dying, affections in him, could no more be contracted with the narrowness of pain, grief, or sickness, than any

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Vitellius, C. xvii. † Ibid.

sparkle of our immortality can be buried in the shadow of death."*

In this will, after the customary preamble, in which Sir Philip Sidney bequeathed his soul to God and his body to the grave, he made arrangements for the disposal of the property of which, owing to his father's death, he had five months before become the owner. His wife, Lady Frances Sidney, was, during her lifetime, to receive half the income arising out of all his manors, lands, tenements, rights, and reversions. Four thousand pounds were to be set apart as a portion for his infant daughter Elizabeth, besides suitable provision being made for her education and maintenance until such time as she might be married. Land to the value of a hundred pounds a year, selected from any part of his estates except Penshurst, was to be accorded to his brother, Thomas. All the rest of the present income, save certain other small bequests, and the reversion of the whole property, was assigned to the elder brother, Robert.

Of the numerous minor bestowments made by Sir Philip, some claim to be noticed as illustrations of his temper, and of the esteem in which he held his various friends and kindred. To his uncles, the Earls of Leicester and Warwick, and to his wife's parents, Sir Francis and Lady Walsingham, he left a hundred pounds apiece, to be taken in money, or, better, in some jewel or other article which could last as a memento of him. For his aunt, the Countess of Sussex, another

* Fulke Greville, p. 158.

aunt's husband, the Earl of Huntingdon, and his brother-in-law, the Earl of Pembroke, he desired that three gold rings, set with large diamonds, and all exactly alike, might be fashioned. To his friend, Sir William Russel, he bequeathed his best suit of armour; to Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville, all his books; to Edward Wotton, an annual present of a buck from Penshurst; and to many other friends he left little legacies of the same sort. Every servant was remembered, from the old and faithful attendant, Griffin Madox—whom we saw going with Sidney to France, Germany, and Italy, in 1572, and the following years, and who had ever since been acting as his faithful steward,—to whom he assigned an annuity of forty pounds a year, to some who were to receive simple presents of five pounds apiece. To the surgeons and divines who were waiting upon him during this his last illness, a gift of twenty pounds apiece was to be made. Moreover, it was written, "I will and absolutely authorize the Right Honourable Sir Francis Walsingham, and my brother, Robert Sidney, or either of them, to sell so much of my lands as shall pay all my debts, as well those of my father deceased as of mine own, beseeching them to hasten the same, and to pay the creditors with all possible speed, according to that letter of attorney which Sir Francis Walsingham already hath, sealed and subscribed by me to that end; which letter of attorney I do hereby ratify and confirm, so far forth as concerneth for that purpose to all effect of law."*

* Collins, *Introduction to the Sidney Papers*, pp. 109—113.

This final business being completed, Sir Philip Sidney requested that the ode, which he had written two or three weeks ago, might be chanted to him for the last time. Then during three or four hours he at intervals conversed upon matters proper to the occasion. As long as he could speak without pain he talked freely, propounding any difficulties that occurred to him, and discussing anything which was said by others, and to which he could not agree. Whenever there was a long silence, he said, "I pray you speak to me still," or words to that effect. "In the midst of these speeches,"—wrote Gifford, "which were for the company of faith to gather an assurance of God's law touching the vanity of this life, the victory of Christ over death, the glory which the body shall have at the resurrection, and that present felicity which the soul shall be admitted to by the holy angels—as the light of a lamp is continued by pouring in of oil, so he sought to have the burning zeal and flame of his prayer, unto which his heart was still bent, cherished by the comforts of the Holy Word, accounting it a great injury if we did not seek to give wings to his faith, to carry up his prayers speedily, uttering grief when he felt any thought interrupting him. And, although he had professed the Gospel, loved and favoured those that did embrace it, entered deeply into the concerns of the Church, taken good order and very good care for his family and soldiers to be instructed and to be brought to live accordingly, yet, entering into deep examination of his life, now in the time of his affliction, he felt those inward motions and workings of a

spirit exciting him to a deep sorrow for his former conduct." *

One of the company spoke of the comfort which godly men were wont to feel, at the hour of death, from recalling those passages of their lives in which God had helped them to work most purely and most to the enlargement of His glory. "It is not so with me," answered Sir Philip, "I have no comfort that way. All things in my former life have been vain, vain, vain." †

Most vain of all, as it seemed to this brave man, standing upon the edge of eternity and looking stedfastly at the things of Heaven, was his *Arcadia*, a work mainly devoted to the fictitious presentment of earthly love. Turning to one of the friends near him, he bade him collect all the scattered leaves of the manuscript, and consign them to the flames. "What promise his friend returned herein is uncertain," said he who told the tale; "but if he brake his word to be faithful to the public good, posterity will absolve him, without doing any penance, for being guilty of such a meritorious offence, whereby he hath obliged so many ages." ‡

About noon he became visibly weaker, and at the thought of so quickly losing him for ever, those who loved him most could not suppress their grief. Loudest of all in the utterance of his affliction was Robert Sidney. Very touching was the contrast between those two loving brothers, "the weaker showing infinite

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Vitellius, C. xvii.

† Ibid.

‡ *The Life and Death of Sir Philip Sidney.*

strength in suppressing sorrow, and the stronger infinite weakness in expressing it." But the concealed struggle of affection, augmented by the earnest words which he heard, was too much for the dying man. He desired his brother to leave him, after his hand, pale and fleshless, had for the last time been clasped with the other's. "Love my memory," he said, in parting, "cherish my friends: their faith to me may assure you they are honest. But, above all, govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator; in me beholding the end of the world with all her vanities." *

Those seem to have been about the last words uttered by him. He sank down upon his pillow, quite exhausted. His eyes closed. His cold hands lay as if lifeless, just where they had chanced to fall. The curdling blood appeared hardly to flow through its channels. His friends thought that his former fear had been realized, that his understanding had left him, and that it was useless for them to speak to him any more. But it was far otherwise. "Sir," said Gifford, after a pause, "if you hear what I say, let us by some means know it, and, if you have still your inward joy and consolation in God, hold up your hand." Immediately the hand which they had thought powerless, and in which they would have been content to see the slightest bend of recognition, was lifted up and held out, for a little while, at full length; a circumstance, we are told, which caused the beholders to cry out with delight, that his understanding should still be so

* Fulke Greville, p. 159.

perfect, and that his weak body should give such clear and ready token of the joy of his soul. *

A little later, at about two o'clock in the afternoon of this memorable Monday, the 17th of October,† his friends asked him for a fresh token of his mental power and spiritual confidence. Could he show them that he was still leaning in prayerful trust upon God's mercy? He could not speak, he could not open his eyes to look upon them: but straightway he raised both his hands and set them together on his breast and held them, with joined palms and fingers pointing upwards, after the manner of those who make humble, earnest petition to the Most High. But he had not strength, if he had the will, to remove them. The watchers saw that they were becoming stiff and chill with death. So they gently placed them by his side. After a few minutes more he had ceased to breathe.‡

One of the purest and noblest spirits that ever animated flesh had gently, bravely passed from earth to Heaven. One of the fairest and comeliest bodies ever shaped to be the beautiful mansion of a godlike mind was empty, waiting to be committed to the safe keeping of the grave's darkness and corruption, till summoned to come forth clothed in light and endowed with incorruptibility, fit tenement for the soul, renewed and exalted, which had quitted it for a time.

"Sir," wrote the Earl of Leicester to Sir Francis Walsingham, on the 25th of October, "the grief I have

* *Cotton. MSS.*, Vitellius, C. xvii.
† Hollinshed, vol. iii. p. 1555.
‡ *Cotton. MSS.*, Vitellius, C. xvii.

taken for the loss of my dear son and yours, would not suffer me to write sooner of those ill news unto you, specially being in so good hope, so very little time before, of his good recovery. But he is with the Lord, and His will must be done. What perfection he was born unto, and how able he was to serve Her Majesty and his country, all men here almost wonder. For mine own part I have lost, beside the comfort of my life, a most principal stay and help in my service here, and, if I may say it, I think none of all hath a greater loss than the Queen's Majesty herself. Your sorrowful daughter and mine is here with me at Utrecht till she may recover some strength, for she is wonderfully overthrown through her long care since the beginning of her husband's hurt; and I am the more careful that she should be in some strength ere she take her journey into England, for that she is with child, which, I pray God send to be a son, if it be His will; but, whether son or daughter, they shall be my children too."* It seems, however, that neither son nor daughter came into the world alive. Lady Frances Sidney's wifely zeal had interfered with her motherly responsibilities, and her child, as we are to infer, was still-born. "The Lord hath inflicted us with sharpness," said Leicester in another letter.†

I might fill many pages with rehearsal of the grief and sympathy aroused by Sir Philip Sidney's death. Queen Elizabeth, when she heard of it, we are told, was overwhelmed with sorrow. She deplored the loss not

* *Leicester Correspondence*, pp. 445, 446.
† Ibid. p. 480.

only of the worthiest ornament of her Court, but also of the already famous Governor of Flushing. In the hour of her trouble, she declared she had no one left who could so persistently and successfully carry on the war against the Spanish monarch.* That opinion seems to have been very general among both friends and foes. Mendoza, the Secretary of King Philip, himself, is stated to have said that, though he was glad his master had lost, in this private gentleman, a leading enemy to his estate, yet he could not but lament to see Christendom deprived of so rare a light in those cloudy times, and that poor widowed England, having been many years breeding one eminent spirit, was in a moment bereaved of him.† Fortunately England had not a few other eminent spirits, now bred and breeding; but her bereavement of this one was not, on that account, less grievous.

Meanwhile the hero's corpse was waiting for burial. On Monday, the 24th of October, having been suitably embalmed, it was removed from Arnheim to Sidney's own house at Flushing, there to remain for eight days. On the 1st of November it was conveyed to the water's edge, followed by twelve hundred of the English soldiers, walking by threes and threes, and trailing their swords and muskets in the dust, and by all the burghers of the town. As they proceeded, solemn music was performed. Rounds of small shot were thrice fired by all the men present, and from the great ordnance on the walls two volleys were discharged as

* *Leicester Correspondence*, pp. 451, 452.

† Zouch, p. 285.

the body was taken from the shore. It was placed in the *Black Prince*, a pinnace of Sir Philip Sidney's own, its sails, tackle, and other furniture being all of black stuff, and was accompanied by several other vessels in mourning.*

The people of the Netherlands were very loth to part with the remains of him whom they had learned greatly to love while he was alive. The States entreated that the honour of his burial might be conferred upon them: if so, they would pledge themselves, they averred, to erect for him as fair a monument as had ever been set up for any King or Emperor in Christendom; "yea, though the same should cost half-a-ton of gold in the building."† But England claimed the prize.

On Friday, the 5th of November, the mournful cargo was landed at Tower Hill on the Thames, and thence conveyed to a house in the Minories, there to stay for more than three months before interment.‡ The reason for this unusual delay is very curious. "Sir Philip Sidney hath left a great number of poor creditors," wrote Walsingham to Leicester, on this 5th of November. "What order he hath taken by his will for their satisfaction I know not. It is true that immediately after the death of his father he sent me a letter of attorney for the sale of such portion of land as might content his creditors, when there was nothing done before his death. I have paid, and must pay for him about six thousand pounds, which I do assure your Lordship hath brought

* *The Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney* (1587). Stowe, p. 739.

† Hollinshed, vol. iii. p. 1555; Fulke Greville, p. 165.

‡ *The Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney.*

me into a most desperate and hard state, which I weigh nothing in respect of the loss of the gentleman who was my chief worldly comfort."* We have seen how Sidney, in preparing his will, had taken very loving care of all his own and his father's creditors. But when the document reached England, there was found to be a legal difficulty in its execution, owing to the son's death having followed so very quickly upon the father's. "I have caused Sir Philip Sidney's will to be considered of some gentlemen learned in the law," Walsingham said in another letter, "and I find the same imperfect touching the sale of his land for the satisfying of his poor creditors; which, I assure your Lordship, doth greatly afflict me, that a gentleman that hath lived so unspotted a reputation, and had so great cares to see all men satisfied, should be so exposed to the outcry of his creditors. This hard estate of this noble gentleman maketh me stay to take order for his burial until your Lordship return. I do not see how the same can be performed, with that solemnity that appertaineth, without the utter undoing of his creditors, which is to be weighed in conscience."†

Therefore the funeral was postponed until February, 1587. By that month either the lawyers' hindrance had been overcome, or, as is more probable, Sir Francis Walsingham had saved money enough to pay the expenses out of his own purse. It was the common thought of people at the time, that the thing was done at his individual cost, and purely out of love for his son-

* *Leicester Correspondence*, pp. 453, 454.

† Ibid., pp. 456, 457.

in-law's memory.* At any rate we may be sure that the ceremony was honestly paid for; and it was a more splendid ceremony, perhaps, than had ever yet been performed in honour of any English subject.

Thursday, the 16th of February, 1587, was the day of Sidney's burial, four months all but a day, after his death. No pains and no expense were spared to make the pageant worthy of the hero. Upwards of seven hundred mourners took rank in the funeral procession, which contained representatives of every class of English life, duly betokening the grief felt by all England. Two and thirty poor men, one for every year of Sidney's life, led the way, in long mourning gowns, their short hats being pressed tightly over their heads and long staves being in their hands. Next walked six infantry officers in undress, followed by two sergeants, with short coats and halberds hanging down; by two fifers and two drummers, who played very soft, and slow, and solemn music; by a youth dragging through the dust an ensign embroidered with stars and marked with the motto, *Semper eadem;* and lastly by a lieutenant of foot, with his truncheon reversed. Next came some officers of Sidney's horse, two corporals, and four trumpeters, belted, booted, and spurred, but with their truncheons also reversed, with the standard of the regiment, on which was the inscription *Pulchrum propter se*, trailing upon the ground, and with the baton of its lieutenant also pointed downwards. Then two ushers appeared, preceding a more splendid part of the spectacle. An

* *The Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney.*

uplifted standard, showing the cross of St. George, the Sidney crest of a porcupine, collared and chained, between three crowned lions' heads, and Sir Philip's own device *Vix ea nostra voco*, was borne by Mr. Richard Gwynne, dressed in a long black cloak, and with a tight hood, fitting in front so as almost to hide his face, and at his back reaching nearly to the ground. After him walked in pairs, sixty of Sidney's gentlemen and yeomen, men of all ages and sizes, but clothed alike in plain garbs of mourning. By themselves were Doctor James and Mr. Kell, the dead man's principal physician and surgeon, and a few paces behind was Griffin Madox, his loving steward. Then there came sixty esquires of his kindred and friends, dressed like the gentlemen, and next twelve knights, also dressed in the same way, except that they wore ruffs about their necks. Of these twelve the best known were Sir Francis Drake, Sir Edward Waterhouse, and Sir Thomas Perrot. The preacher appointed for the day, attended by two chaplains, parted these latter from the bearer of a pennant on which were embroidered Sir Philip's arms, and this served to introduce a separate portion of the procession. The hero's war horse, richly furnished, was led by a footman and ridden by a little page in whose left hand was one end of a broken lance, the other end being left to trail on the ground; and following it, was a barbed horse, caparisoned with cloth of gold, and with another little page, who held a reversed battle-axe on its saddle. Next was seen the great banner, carried by Henry White, and attended by five of the heralds, in whose hands were badges of Sidney's knighthood. Portcullis

held his spurs and his gloves, Blue-mantle his gauntlets, Rouge Dragon his helmet, Richmond his shield, and Somerset his tabard, while Clarence King-at-arms walked sedately at their rear. All these served as ushers of the coffin, which at length approached. Shrouded in rich black velvet and adorned, before and behind, on each side and at the top, with repetitions of the Sidney arms, it was lodged on two long poles, each resting on the shoulders of seven yeomen. Four youths of the family held up the family banners, and the pall was supported by Sir Philip's four dearest friends, Fulke Greville, Edward Dyer, Edward Wotton, and Thomas Dudley; one being at each corner, and all clad in long gowns and closely fitting hoods. Sir Robert Sidney, dressed in the same garb, walked as chief mourner, and at a little distance were four knights and two gentlemen, the chief being Thomas Sidney. Then, preceded by two gentlemen-ushers and suitably mounted, came in pairs, the Earls of Leicester and Huntingdon, the Earls of Pembroke and Essex, the Lords Willoughby and North. They were followed by seven gentlemen of the Low Countries, one representative of each of the United Provinces, and by a long cavalcade headed by the Lord Mayor, in his purple robes. After him rode his aldermen, sheriffs, and recorder, twenty in all. Next came a hundred and twenty unarmed citizens of London, on foot; and about three hundred civilians, trained for war, and all holding their weapons in the backward way, made up the rear.*

* *The Funeral of Sir Philip Sidney.* A copy, I believe unique, of

The company, thus ordered, started from the Minories and proceeded slowly to Saint Paul's Cathedral, through streets so crowded that it was very difficult to pass at all. At length they reached the Church, of which the inside seemed to be altogether wrapped in black. Then the coffin was placed upon a pile, covered with black velvet, and beautifully adorned with escutcheons. Its motto *Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur*, found echo in the heart of all the thousands who saw them written there and heard them uttered and enforced by the preacher. The sermon being over, and the service read, the body was interred, and a double volley of shot from the churchyard warned the people that all was over.

Yet the grief thus publicly and splendidly displayed by the multitudes who attended Sir Philip Sidney's funeral was but a partial indication of the hearty sorrow felt by thousands upon thousands now, and before, and after. "It was accounted a sin," we are told, "for any gentleman of quality, for many months after, to appear at Court or City, in any light or gaudy apparel." * "What man can hold," quaintly exclaimed the same authority, "from bestowing a curse upon that friar of Mentz who, by intelligence from hell, first invented and perfected that brood of guns, the sworn enemy to personal valour! For, had conquest been decided by

this singular and very valuable work is in the library of the British Museum, consisting of thirty plates, designed to be fastened together so as to form one long roll. and giving pictorial presentment of the whole pageant.

* *The Life and Death of Sir Philip Sidney.*

sword and buckler, the only judge thereof in ancient ages, the subject of our complaint had, in probability, survived many years."

And undoubtedly, he had fairly earned his country's tribute of loving and sorrowful speech. "This is that Sidney," wrote Camden of his kindest and most sympathetic patron, "who, as Providence seems to have sent him into the world to give the present age a specimen of the ancients, so did it on a sudden recal him and snatch him from us as more worthy of Heaven than of earth." But the true-hearted student of men's thoughts and actions, and of Heaven's dealing with them in all ages, was too wise to grieve or repine. "Rest then in peace, O Sidney," he added, "we will not celebrate your memory with tears, but admiration. Whatever we loved in you, whatever we admired in you, still continues and will continue in the memories of men, the revolutions of ages, and the annals of time. Many, as inglorious and ignoble, are buried in oblivion; but Sidney shall live to all posterity. For, as the Grecian poet has it, virtue's beyond the reach of fate." *

Volumes would be filled were I to collect all the praise uttered in prose, and still more extensively in verse, by Sir Philip Sidney's contemporaries or his immediate successors. By the students of Oxford two volumes of elegiac poetry, chiefly in Latin, were heaped up; and the sister University of Cambridge, though not able to claim him as its member, issued a similar

* Camden, *Britannia.*

book of praise and lamentations.* Every one wrote something, and the writings of at least two hundred authors are extant. Greatest in poetical power was Edmund Spenser, from whose *Astrophel* I have several times quoted. Chief in worldly station was King James the Sixth of Scotland who, besides a Latin epigram, penned these lines in English.

"Thou mighty Mars, the lord of soldiers brave,
And thou Minerve, that does in wit excel,
And thou Apollo, who does knowledge have
Of every art that from Parnassus fell,
With all your sisters that thereon do dwell,
Lament for him who duly served you all,
Whom-in you wisely all your arts did mell,
Bewail, I say, his unexpected fall;
I need not in remembrance for to call
His race, his youth, the hope had of him ay,
Since that in him doth cruel death appal
Both manhood, wit, and learning every way;
But yet he doth in bed of honour rest,
And evermore of him shall live the best."

That sonnet has been quoted solely because of its authorship. Another claims citation both as being one of the sweetest and richest in our language, and as evidence of the kindliness with which a man who was a Papist, and who, therefore, had to divide much of his life between exile and imprisonment, could speak of one of

* *Peplus illustrissimi viri D. Sidnæi supremis honoribus dicatus*, Oxon. 1587. *Exequiæ illustrissimi Equitis D. Philippi Sidnæi gratissimæ memoriæ ac nomini impensæ*, Oxon. 1589. *Academiæ Cantabrigiensis Lacrymæ, tumulo nobilissimi Equitis D. Philippi Sidnæi sacratæ per Alexandrum Nevillum*, Lond. 1587.

the foremost champions of the Protestant faith. It is the first of Henry Constable's *Four Sonnets to Sir Philip Sidney's Soul*;—

" Give pardon, blessed soul, to my bold cries,
If they, importunate, interrupt the song
Which now, with joyful notes, thou sing'st among
The angel-choristers of heavenly skies.
Give pardon eke, sweet soul, to my slow cries,
That since I saw thee now it is so long,
And yet the tears that unto thee belong
To thee as yet they did not sacrifice.
I did not know that thou wert dead before,
I did not feel the grief I did sustain :
The greater stroke astonisheth the more ;
Astonishment takes from us sense of pain ;
I stood amazed when others' tears begun,
And now begin to weep when they have done."

But of all the verses suggested by Sidney's death, there is none so worthy of citation here as *The Doleful Lay of Clorinda*, written in pastoral terms by his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. Probably the model of Milton's *Lycidas*, it might almost be placed in equal rank with it for purity of thought and elegance of expression, though far its inferior in poetical vigour. Long as it is, I must reproduce in its perfectness this exquisite token of sisterly love and of Christian confidence. It opens thus :—

" Ah, me ! to whom shall I my case complain,
That may compassion my impatient grief ?
Or where shall I unfold my inward pain,
That my enriven heart may find relief ?
Shall I unto the heavenly powers it show ?
Or unto earthly men that dwell below ?

" To heavens ? ah, they, alas, the authors were
And workers of my unremèdied woe :
For they foresee what to us happens here,
And they foresaw, yet suffered this be so.
From them comes good ; from them comes also ill ;
That which they made, who can them warn to spill ?

" To men ? ah, they, alas, like wretched be,
And subject to the heavens' ordinance ;
Bound to obey whatever they decree,
Their best redress is their best sufferance.
How then can they, like wretched, comfort me,
The which no less need comforted to be ?

" Then to myself will I my sorrow mourn,
Since none alive like sorrowful remains ;
And to myself my plaints shall back return,
To pay their usury with doubled pains.
The woods, the hills, the rivers shall resound
The mournful accent of my sorrow's ground.

" Woods, hills and rivers now are desolate,
Since he is gone the which them all did grace ;
And all the fields do wail their widow-state,
Since death their fairest flower did late deface.
The fairest flower in field that ever grew
Was Astrophel—*that was*, we all may rue.

" What cruel hand of cursed foe unknown
Hath cropped the stalk which bore so fair a flower ?
Untimely cropped, before it well were grown,
And clean defacèd in untimely hour ;—
Great loss to all that ever him did see,
Great loss to all,—but greatest loss to me !

" Break now your garlands, oh, ye shepherds' lasses,
Since the fair flower which them adorned is gone
The flower which them adorned is gone to ashes ;
Never again let lass put garland on ;
Instead of garland, wear sad cypress now,
And bitter elder, broken from the bough.

" Nor ever sing the love-lays which he made—
Who ever made such lays of love as he?
Nor ever read the riddles which he said
Unto yourselves to make you merry glee.
Your merry glee is now laid all abed:
Your merry-maker now, alas! is dead.

" Death, the devourer of all world's delight,
Hath robbèd you and reft from me my joy.
Both you and me and all the world he quite
Hath robbed of joyance and left sad annoy.
Joy of the world and shepherds' pride was he:
Shepherds, hope never like again to see!

" Oh, Death, that hast us of much riches reft!
Tell us, at least, what hast thou with it done?
What has become of him whose flower here left
Is but the shadow of his likeness gone?
Scarce like the shadow of that which he was,
Nought like, but that he like a shade did pass.

" But that immortal spirit, which was decked
With all the dowries of celestial grace,
By sovereign choice from the heavenly choirs select,
And lineally derived from angels' race—
Oh, what is now of it become aread?
Ah, me, can so divine a thing be dead?

" Ah, no! it is not dead, nor can it die,
But lives for aye in blissful paradise,
Where, like a new-born babe it soft doth lie,
In bed of lilies wrapped in tender wise,
And compassed all about with roses sweet,
And dainty violets from head to feet.

" There thousand birds, all of celestial brood,
To him do sweetly carol, day and night,
And with strange notes, of him well understood,
Lull him to sleep in àngelic delight:
Whilst in sweet dream to him presented be
Immortal beauties which no eye may see.

" But he them sees, and takes exceeding pleasure
Of their divine aspects, appearing plain,
And kindly love in him above all measure,
Sweet love still joyous, never feeling pain.
For what in goodly form he thus doth see,
He may enjoy, from jealous rancour free.

" There liveth he, in everlasting bliss,
Sweet spirit, never more to die ;
Nor dreading harm from any foes of his,
Nor feeling savage beasts' more cruelty:
Whilst we here, wretches, wail his private lack,
And with vain vows do often call him back.

" But live thou there still, happy, happy spirit,
And give us leave thee here thus to lament,
Not thee, that dost thy heavenly joys inherit,
But our own selves that here in dole are drent.
Thus do we weep and wail and wear our eyes,
Mourning in others our own miseries ! "

The Countess of Pembroke certainly had reason to weep. Herself living on in widowhood until the year 1621, she lost very many of her nearest kindred and best friends during a few years. Her father, her mother, and her best loved brother, all died, as we have seen, within a space of less than six months. In 1588, at the age of fifty-six, the Earl of Leicester ended his brilliant life, very bad in many ways, but not without some redeeming points ; and in 1590, before he was fully sixty years old, her other uncle, the Earl of Warwick, passed from a world in which he had dwelt much less pompously but much more worthily. In the same year, England lost one of its ablest and most honest statesmen, and the Sidney family its best friend, in the death of Sir Francis Walsingham. He died in

his fifty-fourth year so poor that it was needful to bury him at night-time in Saint Paul's Cathedral, where he lay in the same tomb with the remains of his honoured son-in-law. Well might Spenser write, in 1591, *The Ruins of Time*, designed to commemorate the greatness of Sir Philip Sidney's kin, so many lately dead, but chiefly Sir Philip Sidney himself, that—

> "Most gentle spirit, breathed from above,
> Out of the bosom of the Maker's bliss,
> In whom all bounty and all virtuous love
> Appeared in their native properties,
> And did enrich that noble breast of his
> With measure passing all this worldë's worth,
> Worthy of Heaven itself, which brought it forth.
>
> "His blessed spirit, full of power divine
> And influence of all celestial grace,
> Loathing this sinful earth and earthly clime,
> Fled back too soon unto his native place,
> Too soon for all that did his love embrace,
> Too soon for all this wretched world, whom he
> Robbed of all right and true nobility."

Besides his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, his younger brother, Colonel Thomas Sidney, of whom hardly anything is known, and his other brother Robert, knighted for his bravery at Zutphen,—who, after inheriting the property of the Sidneys, and being created Baron Penshurst in his own right, was raised by King James the First to the Earldom of Leicester, left vacant by his uncle's death,—Sir Philip left his widow and her infant daughter. Lady Frances Sidney's subsequent story belongs rather to a biography of her second husband, the famous Robert Devereux, Earl of

Essex, than to this volume. After that nobleman's execution, she was again married, her last husband being Richard de Burgh, Earl of Clanricarde, afterwards of St. Albans. The child, Elizabeth Sidney, lived for thirty years. At the age of fifteen she became the wife of Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland. In 1615, she died without issue, her property reverting to her uncle, the new Lord Penshurst, from whom were descended those later Sidneys, male and female, who have helped to make the name illustrious.

But Sir Philip Sidney's name has a lustre of its own. Rare and noble, surely, is his character, evinced in a life of less than two and thirty years. "Indeed," wrote Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, in words which will most fitly close this memoir of his friend and kinsman, "he was a true model of worth; a man fit for conquest, plantation, reformation, or what action soever is the greatest and hardest among men; withal such a lover of mankind and goodness, that whosoever had any real parts, in him found comfort, participation, and protection to the uttermost of his power; like Zephyrus, he giving life where he blew. The universities abroad and at home accounted him a general Mecænas of learning, dedicated their books to him, and communicated every invention or improvement of knowledge with him. Soldiers honoured him, and were so honoured by him, as no man thought he marched under the true banner of Mars, that had not obtained Sir Philip Sidney's approbation. Men of affairs, in most parts of Christendom, entertained correspondency with him. But what

speak I of these with whom his own ways and ends did concur ? since, to descend, his heart and capacity were so large that there was not a cunning painter, a skilful engineer, an excellent musician, or any other artificer of extraordinary fame, that made not himself known to this famous spirit, and found him his true friend without hire, and the common *rendezvous* of worth in his time. Besides, the ingenuity of his nature did spread itself so freely abroad, as who lives that can say he ever did him harm ? whereas there be many living that may thankfully acknowledge he did them good. Neither was this in him a private, but a public affection ; his chief ends being not friends, wife, children, and himself, but above all things the honour of his Maker, and the service of his prince and country."

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1572. In May visits Paris, 54; and forms the acquaintance of Walsingham, 55; stays three months in Paris, enjoying its gaieties, and is made a gentleman of King Charles's bedchamber, 57; witnesses the massacre of St. Bartholomew, 58–60; leaves for Germany in September, 61.

1573. At Frankfort, 61; where he meets Hubert Languet, 62; who takes him to Vienna, 64; thence he goes to Presburg, 65; and afterwards to Venice, 66, 67.

1574. Visits Padua in Jan.; is in Venice by February, 79; and shortly after in Genoa, 79, 80; in Padua again in April, 79; and in Venice throughout June and July; wishes to go to Rome, 80, and Constantinople, 88. In Italy he studies astronomy, 73, 75; a little music, 73; geometry, 75; philosophy, 76; Latin and Greek composition, 73–76; and Italian history and literature, 74. Languet complains that he works too hard, 76, 77. He also keeps careful watch on political occurrences, 83–85, 87, 88; forms friendship with Tintoretto, 72, 78; Paul Veronese, 73, 78, 79; the Count of Hannau, 79, 93; and others, 71; in July attacked with pleurisy, 81; soon afterwards, quitting Italy, he visits Poland, 88; and then winters at Vienna, studying horsemanship, 89.

1575. And classical literature, 115; in Feb. he goes to Prague, 90, 141; and then returns home by way of Dresden, Heidelberg, Strasburg, and Frankfort, where he parts from Languet, 91; ill at Antwerp, and does not reach

London till 31st May, 93; at Kenilworth in July, 96–103; at Chartley in August, 107–109; in London by November, 112; often at Court, 119–121.

1576. Often also with the Earl of Essex at Durham House, 122, 123; marriage between him and the Earl's daughter, Penelope, is now thought of, 124.

In July he is with his father in Ireland, 125; sees Irish life, 126, 127; soon returns to England, where his purposed marriage—urged by Essex on his death-bed in August, 129— is everywhere expected, 132, 133.

1577. In February he is sent as special ambassador to Germany, 137; at Heidelberg he confers with Prince Casimir, 138–140; and then, after visiting Rodolph II. at Prague, and urging him to forbearance and liberality, 140–147; returns to speak with Lewis, the Elector Palatine, 148; disheartened at the state of Protestant Europe, 149, 150; Languet often with him, 151, 152; his mysterious proposal to Sidney, 151, *n.* On his way home Sidney meets Don John of Austria, 153; and wins the friendship of William of Orange, 154; and of his wife Charlotte, 155; of whose child he is godfather, 156; in London by June, and much praised for his mission and his conduct abroad, 157.

In July he visits the Countess of Pembroke at Wilton, 161; in September he hurries to Court, because of the Queen's anger with his father, 167; in Sir Henry Sidney's defence he prepares a series of very convincing arguments, 168–174: which are approved by all, 174; and for a time successful with Elizabeth, 175. In September he writes to Languet about Frobisher's voyage, and supposed discovery of gold, 176, 177; is tempted to join in Frobisher's search, but remains at Court serving his Queen and family, 180.

1578. On New Year's day he exchanges presents with the Queen, 183, 184; but soon—dissatisfied with courtier life, 188—he longs for more real work, 190: either for soldiership in Holland, or for adventure in distant seas, 191, 194, 200. During the summer he affords much help to his father, now again in trouble, 194–197, 205, 206, 211. In May he writes *The Lady of the May*, a masque to be performed at Wanstead, 199, 200, 229, 230; on 1st June he stands godfather to Mornay's daughter, 200; from the Queen he receives some appointment, 200; with her he goes in July to Audley End, 201; here he meets Gabriel Harvey, 202, 233; who makes him the hero of a Latin poem, 233, *n.*; and a friend of Spenser, 234.

1579. On 1st Jan. he again exchanges gifts with the Queen; helps to entertain Casimir and Languet during their visit to England, 213–217; the increasing irksomeness to him of Court life, 219, 220; for relief he turns to literary work, and to the society of literary friends, hence he forms the Areopagus, 237; and attempts to found a new school of poetry, 237–242.

Towards the end of the year he is prominent in his opposition to the Queen's proposed marriage, 245: in September quarrels with the Earl of Oxford, 247–251; and thereby is led to still firmer resistance to the Queen's marriage, 251.

1580. In Dec. or Jan. he writes her a long and earnest letter about it, 252–259; that being ill received, 259–274, he retires to Wilton and its neighbourhood, 262–274; gaining much from his sister's company, 265, 267, probably helping her to translate *The Psalms*, 268; certainly beginning *The Arcadia*, 270. At Court again in Oct. 275–279; meeting with many temptations and opportunities of misusing his energy, the chief being connected with Penelope Devereux, now Lady Rich, 283–291.

1581. On New Year's day he makes three presents to the Queen, 283; in parliament during the spring, 291–294; in May he joins in a grand assault of arms, 295–299; in October he writes to Lord Burghley about some impropriations which he seeks, 301; and in November to the Queen about a cypher prepared for her, 302; is at Wilton in Dec., 306.

1582. In February, he goes, with others, to attend on the Duke of Anjou in the Netherlands, 309–311; is in London by the end of March, 311; his life as a courtier, 312–329; in April his father urges him to go

to Ireland, 353; declining this, he labours hard, though without effect, for the advancement of Sir H. Sidney's fortunes, 360, 361; asks for a seat in the Council, 365; at Wilton in December, seeking absence from Court at Christmas, 362; this not granted, 363.
1583. At Court on New Year's day, 363; perhaps about then the Queen gives him a lock of her hair, 363; on 8 January she knights him, 364; on 27 January, and again on 22 July, he seeks in vain for appointment as Master of the Ordnance, 366, 367; receives a grant of land in America early in the year, 367; not able, however, to use it, 372; and therefore hands over the privilege to Sir George Peckham, 372, 373; in March, or soon after, he is married to Frances, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, 377, 378; the next year being spent in quiet married life, 381, 382.
1584. His interest in politics, 421; appointed ambassador to France, 425; preparations are made, but the journey is prevented, 427. Being greatly troubled by the aspect of affairs, 427, 428, 430–434, he urges the bold and direct assailing of Spanish power, 435–437; on the 23rd of November he enters the new parliament, 440; and is member of various committees, the chief being about Raleigh's Virginian colony, 440.
1585. On the 18th February he is appointed to confer with the Lords about Papists and Puritans, 442. His watch over the Ordnance stores, 447, and interest in Scottish politics, 450; he urges the bestowment of a pension on James of Scotland, 451; on 21st July is united with the Earl of Warwick in the mastership of the Ordnance, 446; in the spring he resolved on attacking the Spanish colonies in the West Indies, 459; his plans matured in the summer, 460–463; hindered by the war in the Netherlands, now determined upon, 457; promise of employment therein, 457; but, hearing that it is to be withheld, 466, he goes to Plymouth to embark with Drake, 467; Drake's treachery and Sidney's scheming, 468, 469; the Queen calls him back to Court, 469; appointed governor of Flushing on the 7th November, 475–477; he assumes office on the 21st, 478, 479; at Middelburg with the Earl of Leicester, 480; their opposite sorts of leadership, 481–483.
1586. His defence of Flushing, 484, 500–502; military plans, 485, 486, 495; zeal and its reward, 487–490; takes Axel in July, 495–497; with Count Hohenlo, 499; the investment of Doesburg, 503; the battle of Zutphen, 504–506; Sidney's death-wound, 506; his brave bearing, 507; conveyed to Arnheim, 507; his sickness, 509–524; his death, 525; private and public grief, 526, 527, 533, 540.
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hard scholar, 19, 33, 76, 77; had "too little fun in his nature," 76; never so happy as when at hard work, 77; seldom very merry, 92; disliked noisy life, 273; "oft most alone in others' company," 317; "a son of excellent good proof," 359; "a very formular for all well-disposed young gentlemen," 279; hardly able to speak scornfully, 415; not apt to discredit others, 468; yet sometimes hasty and hot-tempered, 70, 198; thought it always best to do great things first, and let them be talked about afterwards, 464.

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